

Wednesday September 9 1998

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The Guardian

INTERNATIONAL

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Cover story

Kenneth Starr: hero or villain?

G2 with European weather

Arts

Sweet side of Vicious

G2 pages 8/9

Society

Green dream turns turtle

G2 pages 12/13

State of nation poll shows PM as 'just another politician'

Blair bubble bursts

Tony Blair

Percentage of respondents agreeing with these descriptions

1997

1998

0 change

Tough

Arrogant

Understands people like us

Has got personality

More honest than most politicians

Expected

Has more guts than other politicians

Expected

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Tony Blair and Cherie at the funeral service for Viscount Rothermere at St Bride's in Fleet Street yesterday.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GRAHAM TURNER

TONY BLAIR'S honeymoon with the voters is over and a disaffected electorate is beginning to view him as just another politician, according to the latest Guardian/ICM opinion poll published today.

The extraordinary bubble of popularity surrounding the Prime Minister, which broke records in the aftermath of Labour's landslide victory, has now burst.

The poll shows that his personal ratings, particularly those for honesty and empathy with the voters, have plummeted to levels more in keeping with ratings for past Prime Ministers.

The survey shows that Mr Blair's personality rating has tumbled from an unrealistic 80 per cent to 50 per cent, still a high figure, but one which will be more concerned by a knock to his reputation for personal honesty, empathy and toughness.

His ratings — particularly when respondents were asked whether he is "more honest than most politicians" — have come down to levels similar to those enjoyed by John Major, although Mr Blair is seen as being more in touch with voters' concerns. Mr Blair can also take some comfort from the fact that the 50 per cent of voters who see him as "having more style than substance" has not risen markedly during the past 12 months.

But if the poll shows Mr Blair coming down to earth, it also shows that the Conservative leader, William Hague, has yet to get off the ground. It is clear from the detailed results that failing support for the Prime Minister is the result of disaffection with politicians rather than voters switching allegiance.

Mr Hague appears to have made little progress in the last year and barely registered with those questioned. The only Hague attribute mentioned repeatedly (by 43 per cent of those questioned) is arrogance. This finding is underlined by the fact that only one in ten voters believe the Conservatives will be returned to power at the next election. Most believe they will be out of power for at least another nine years.

The annual Guardian/ICM "state of the nation" survey shows that Labour's hard-won reputation for being the best party to manage the economy has also taken a sharp knock. Only 35 per cent of voters agree, a fall of 15 points. Britain is also seen by increasing numbers as becoming a less equal society.

But despite growing talk of recession, redundancies and volatile stock markets, most voters say their own family finances have improved or stayed the same. The proportion of voters whose family finances have worsened remains roughly the same at 28 per cent.

The poll also shows that Labour has arrested the decline in confidence in the National Health Service and schools. There was a drop of 18 points in the number of voters who believe that hospitals are getting worse, and a smaller fall of five points in the number who think conditions in schools are going downhill.

But the electorate is still a long way from being convinced that the NHS and education system are actually improving. The affects of Labour's promise of an extra £40 billion for these services over the next three years has yet to be felt.

Labour voters in particular have become convinced that the school system is improving (up 14 points to 42 per cent), and 21 per cent believe it is getting worse (down seven points). On the NHS, Labour voters are only slightly more optimistic.

The state of the nation survey, which asks voters to give their verdict on the performance of the party leaders and the Government on twelve key indicators, also shows a narrowing split in public opinion on Europe, and rising concern about food safety.

Monthly polls show Labour enjoying a 19 point lead over the Tories. The September figures are: Labour 48 per cent (up one); Conservatives 29 per cent (down two); Lib Dems 17 per cent (no change) and others 6 per cent (up two).

ICM interviewed a random sample of 1,178 adults aged over 16 by telephone between September 4 and 6 1998. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults.

Poll details, page 5 and on the Guardian's website at <http://www.guardian.co.uk>. Leader comment, page 9.

Both Mr Mansergh and Fr Reid were involved in negotiations which led to the IRA's first ceasefire in 1994. It is thought Fr Reid had direct contact with Rael IRA members.

After the Real IRA announced its suspension of violence pending consultation, a subsequent meeting in Co Clare failed to reach a conclusion on whether to call a ceasefire. Both governments then pushed ahead with "draconian" legislation.

Mr Abern used the new legislation as a lever to secure the ceasefire.

Members of the Real IRA, and its political wing, the 32-County Sovereignty Committee, also received an ultimatum from the IRA. In a coordinated operation last week, each was visited by unmasked IRA men who read out an army council statement. It gave them two weeks to disband. Some of the visitors said they would otherwise be shot.

Hours after the Omagh bomb, Gerry Adams, Sinn Féin president, condemned a republican atrocity for the first time. His colleague, Martin McGuinness, called on the Real IRA to disband.

Those present at the meeting in Dundalk included the Real IRA's chief of staff, who founded the group last year after quitting the IRA, where he was quartermaster-general.

He was opposed to Sinn Féin's participation in the multi-party negotiations at turn to page 2, column 7.

How Real IRA were pushed into ceasefire

Irish police turned blind eye to crucial meeting of army council

John Mullen

Ireland Correspondent

POLICE in Ireland were instructed to allow the Real IRA's army council to meet without fear of arrest as the Irish government's behind-the-scenes efforts to push the breakaway group into announcing a ceasefire reached a successful climax early yesterday.

Bertie Ahern, Irish prime minister, had appointed Martin Mansergh, his special adviser on Northern Ireland, and Fr Alex Reid, a Belfast priest, to liaise with the hard-line terrorists responsible for

the murder of 29 people in Omagh last month. The British government was kept informed of the secret negotiations.

Although the Real IRA's statement of a complete cessation of violence came just before 2am yesterday after its seven-strong leadership met on Monday night in Co Louth, both governments were anticipating it. They immediately gave it a cautious welcome.

Gardai had the Real IRA's leaders under round-the-clock surveillance. The group indicated to the Irish government last week it was at last ready to declare permanent its suspension of violence, and

named three days after the Omagh bombing. But it feared it was liable to mass arrest if it met to finalise the move.

The anti-terrorist laws, passed last week after the recall of both Parliaments, may now be held in reserve. There is speculation that this could mean the Real IRA's leader and founder will remain at large.

Tony Blair's approach yesterday echoed the reaction of Mr Ahern. The emphasis was back on hunting down those behind the Omagh atrocity rather than on the mass round-up of 25 leading members of the Real IRA under the new legislation.

Mr Blair emphasised those convicted of the bombing would serve full prison sentences. He said they would be ineligible for the accelerated

early release programme in the Good Friday Agreement.

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The ten who catches Mark McGuinness's record-breaking home run baseball could make \$1m — but there is a catch, probably involving the Internal Revenue Service. Report, page 2; Matthew Engel, page 15.

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Sum assured (£100,000)	Per Annum	Total paid over 30 year term	Saving with Direct Line
Direct Line	£202.30	£4044.00	-
Abbey National Life	£272.64	£5452.80	£1408.80
Nationwide Life	£294.00	£5880.00	£1836.00

Source: Life and Pensions MoneyFacts - July 1998



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+ Maureen Freely asks: When is it OK to leave a child on its own in the house? + Happy Days with Andy McCluskey

US obsessions: A beleaguered president, a triumphant baseball player



Mark McGwire swings his bat for record-equalling home run number 61 on Monday night. The ball hit for number 62 could be worth \$1 million

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN GAPS

Clinton to plead with party not to desert him

Martin Kettle in Washington

A BESIEGED Bill Clinton will plead for support from senior Democrats today as the White House mounts an increasingly desperate attempt to prevent the report on the Monica Lewinsky affair sweeping the president from office.

With Washington on red alert for the publication of prosecutor Kenneth Starr's report, Mr Clinton has summoned Democratic leaders in the House of Representatives to an emergency White House breakfast meeting today where he will plead with his party to stand by him.

The hastily arranged private meeting with the House Democratic leader, Richard Gephardt, and his lieutenants, with whom the Clinton administration has often had strained relations in the past, comes as support continues to ebb from the president amid signs that the Lewinsky affair is threatening Democratic

chances in November's mid-term elections. Another key political ally delivered a personal attack on Mr Clinton's sexual behaviour yesterday. Senator Barbara Boxer of California, a long-time supporter whose daughter is the president's sister-in-law, told the Senate that Mr Clinton's behaviour was "wrong", "indefensible" and "immoral".

Mr Starr is expected to pull no punches in his report on Mr Clinton's sexual misconduct. The Senate Republican leader, Trent Lott, said the report was expected within the next two weeks.

He will meet Mr Clinton tomorrow with Senate and House leaders from both parties. The presidential spokesman, Mike McCurry, confirmed that the Lewinsky crisis will be discussed.

Mr Lott yesterday scoffed at a request by Mr Clinton's lawyers for an early look at the report. "Why should they get special treatment?" he asked.

The request came as

rumours abounded that the White House would resort to spilling tactics to delay the impact of the report, which is due to be considered first by the House Judiciary committee. But there was speculation that Clinton lawyer David Kendall, claiming precedent from the Watergate crisis of 1974, would try to ensure the report is first submitted to a judge, rather than Congress.

In another key meeting later today, House leaders, including Mr Gephardt and the Republican Speaker, Newt Gingrich, will attempt to hammer out a bipartisan framework under which Henry Hyde, the Republican chairman of the House Judiciary committee, can receive the report from Mr Starr. Both sides have agreed in principle that some House rules should be lifted in order that the report can be considered in time for the scheduled end of the Congressional session, set for October 9.

The request came as

Fan frenzy for \$1m catch – but here's the catch

Martin Kettle in Washington

AS AMERICA wondered whether its new baseball superhero, Mark McGwire, might hit a record-breaking 62nd home run of the season, fans in the 45,000 capacity Busch stadium in St Louis were last night weighing the possibly crippling price of their own moment of glory.

If the record-breaking ball rockets from McGwire's bat towards the crowd, some daredevil fan will throw himself into the melee and come up clutching a ball that could be worth as much as a million dollars.

By law, a baseball that leaves the field of play becomes the property of whoever catches it. Even routine hits into the crowd spark a frenzy. To deter hoaxers, the St Louis Cardinals are using specially imprinted balls for pitches to McGwire.

But catching the ball would be the first of several hurdles facing the "loopy" fan. As McGwire has neared the record, successful fans have been donating balls back to "Big Mac" in return for signed memorabilia, season tickets and the chance to be photographed shaking the mightiest right hand in America.

The trouble with the 62nd ball is that it will be too valuable to return to McGwire. An anonymous bidder in New York has offered \$1 million (£600,000) for it and plans to auction the ball for Latin American human rights work. But the fan who catches the ball could face a massive tax bill in return for mishandling his brief moment of glory.

Tax experts say the catcher will have several options, few of them cheap. If he keeps the ball he will pay no tax, but the ball will become taxable when he dies.

If he sells the ball, he will owe tax on the profit. If he sells for a million dollars, he will owe 39.6 per cent of the proceeds to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). If he gives the ball back to McGwire, 40 per cent gift tax is payable because the ball is worth more than \$25,000, the IRS's lifetime allowable gift-tax credit. On a million-dollar ball, \$150,000 would be payable on the taxable \$750,000 excess.

The only way to avoid tax entirely is to give the ball to charity. The charity could then auction the ball tax-free.

The IRS has been repeatedly chastised for its insensitivity. Yesterday it refused to say whether it would turn a blind eye to the fate of ball number 62. "I can confirm your understanding of how the gift tax works," was all a spokesman would say.

Matthew Engel, page 15

Ministers to crack down on NHS 'fat cat' pay-offs

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

MINISTERS are to crack down on "fat cat" pay-offs for NHS managers, after the Guardian revealed that a health trust in Cornwall had been contemplating a £350,000 payment to its chief executive.

Alan Milburn, Health Minister, said last night the case reflected an "unacceptable" state of affairs brought about by trusts' ability to do as they pleased under the last govern-

ment. "There is clear evidence that some trusts have abused their powers by giving a few senior managers overly generous contracts of employment," he said.

"The Government is now considering what it needs to do to ensure the end of fat cat settlements in the NHS."

The issue of pay-offs for senior trust managers is highly topical, with trusts in many parts of the country facing merger under the Government's drive to prune administrative costs.

Donald Dewar, Scottish Sec-

retary, last week announced that the 46 trusts in Scotland would be reduced next spring to 28.

He said that the move would free an extra £18 million a year for patient care.

However, there is a lack of ground rules on pay-offs and many chief executives, as well as other directors, have lucrative, legally binding contracts signed by trust boards on individual bases.

The Cornish case was disclosed on Monday. Confidential correspondence revealed that Cornwall Healthcare

trust was under pressure from the NHS Executive to end the contract of Philip Sanders, the trust's £75,000-a-year chief executive, ahead of a proposed merger with another trust next spring.

Solicitors had warned Catherine Blight, who chairs Cornwall Healthcare, that 55-year-old Mr Sanders could be entitled to a total £250,000, including buying out his contract to August 2000, enhancing his pension and making a payment in lieu of redundancy.

The solicitors had said the case would need to be handled "extremely carefully" in view of the sums involved.

The NHS in the county has been facing a deficit of 24 million a year. Ministers have vetoed plans to close four cottage hospitals, but have agreed the closure of a children's hospital unit in Penzance.

Mrs Blight yesterday said in a statement that no decisions had been made on Mr Sanders' future, but that her board would not have sanctioned pay-offs "of the magnitude suggested".

The First Division Association, the senior civil servants' trade union, which represents Mr Sanders, responded bluntly to Mr Milburn's comments.

Jonathan Baume, general secretary, said: "We would be deeply concerned at any attempt by ministers to breach our members' contracts or block their statutory pension entitlements, particularly when many of our members are being made redundant because of government policies. These contracts have been properly authorised."

The Real IRA criticised the IRA for calling its ceasefire through its army council instead of an army convention, a much larger forum. Now it is adopting the same mechanism, representing a possible escape route from the cessation.

Only the Continuity IRA, near-extinct with only two dozen members, is still to call a ceasefire. One caller to an Irish newspaper said yesterday: "The struggle goes on."

Several of its members switched this year to the Real IRA.

Security forces concede some hardcore terrorists opposed to the ceasefire might return to Continuity IRA or even form another organisation.

Britain's poor are worse off than ever

Larry Elliott, Economics Editor

DEPRIVATION, chronic unemployment and poor levels of literacy have turned the UK into one of the most poverty-stricken countries in the developed West, the United Nations says today.

A growing gulf between rich and poor in Britain has meant that despite a sixfold increase in global consumption since the mid-1970s, only the United States and Ireland among wealthy nations suffer from higher levels of poverty.

In its annual Human Development Report, the UN found that the gap between rich and poor countries has continued to widen, with the richest 15 people in the world having assets that exceed the total annual income of Sub-Saharan Africa.

It found that of the 4.4 billion people in developing countries, 60 per cent lived in communities without basic sanitation and almost one-third were without safe drinking water.

But the UN said that social exclusion was also a problem in the wealthy countries of the West, where 200 million people were not expected to live until the age of 60, 100 million were homeless, and 37 million were unemployed.

America, the richest country in the world in terms of income per head, is last in a new UN league table of 17 developed countries for poverty.

Anglo-Saxon countries fill four of the bottom six places, with Australia in 12th place and New Zealand 13th.

European countries, where growing income inequality has been far less marked in the 1980s and 1990s, fill the top places in the UN's table. Sweden, Holland and Germany rank as the least impoverished countries in the West.

Co-ordinating on four measures of poverty – life expectancy, deprivation in knowledge, deprivation in income, and social exclusion – the United Nations said that 15 per cent of the British population was living in poverty in 1995.

The report found that nine per cent of people in the UK is not expected to reach 60, in

Poverty index		
	Poverty index	Real GDP ranking
Sweden	1	13
Netherlands	2	10
Germany	3	8
Norway	4	2
Italy	5	9
Finland	6	14
France	7	7
Japan	8	4
Denmark	9	3
Canada	10	5
Belgium	11	6
Australia	12	11
New Zealand	13	16
Spain	14	17
UK	15	12
Ireland	16	15
US	17	1

Source: UN Development Centre 1998

line with most other industrialised countries. However, more than a fifth of adults were considered to be functionally illiterate and 13.6 per cent were living below an internationally recognised measure of the poverty line – 50 per cent of median personal disposable income.

Britain performs worse in terms of poverty than in income per head, where it ranks 12th in the UN's league table. Although the period covered by the data predates the accession to power of the Blair government last year – which made tackling social exclusion one of its main priorities – the evidence provides an indication of the size of the task.

Two of the UN's categories for measuring poverty – long-term unemployment and educational attainment – have been specifically targeted for action by ministers.

"The extent of human poverty has little to do with the average level of income," the UN said.

"The Netherlands and the UK have similar average incomes but very different human poverty levels, at 8.2 per cent and 15 per cent respectively."

"One might expect that the higher a country's GDP, the fewer poor people there would be."

"But comparing GDP per capita and the human poverty index suggests the opposite: poverty rates in higher-income countries are the same as – or higher than – rates in lower-income industrial countries."

J K Galbraith, page 8

Dublin forced hand of Real IRA over declaring ceasefire

continued from page 1
Stormont. His partner was also there. The Real IRA's engine, who is from Dublin, was present too. He held a similar position in the IRA until his defection.

The statement, released to Irish state broadcaster RTE, fell short of saying the group was disbanding. There is another caveat.

The Real IRA criticised the IRA for calling its ceasefire through its army council instead of an army convention, a much larger forum. Now it is adopting the same mechanism, representing a possible escape route from the cessation.

Only the Continuity IRA, near-extinct with only two dozen members, is still to call a ceasefire. One caller to an Irish newspaper said yesterday: "The struggle goes on."

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Security forces concede some hardcore terrorists opposed to the ceasefire might return to Continuity IRA or even form another organisation.

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سكنيا من الاجل

New vaccine for babies to knock out meningitis C

Sarah Boseley and James Melville

PLANS are under way for a vaccination programme for babies which will give them immunity against one of the last childhood killers, meningitis C.

Yesterday, the Department of Health made clear it is no longer a case of if, but when, the vaccine will be ready. David Salisbury, the department's vaccine specialist, said he expected it to be in production within three years. "We are within touching distance of preventing meningitis C cases," he said.

Babies under one year are

'We are talking about a disease that is very serious, one of the last childhood killers'

most at risk of meningitis, which is a stealthy killer because the symptoms too often go undetected. But discussions are now going on to decide which other vulnerable groups should be among the first inoculated. The disease also flares up in the mid to late teens. Recently, there have been outbreaks among college students, who have been given a meningitis C vaccine of limited effectiveness. The new vaccine will give lifelong protection. Babies will get three doses at monthly intervals, alongside vaccinations for diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio.

The end of the research phase is in sight. "The exciting thing is we are now talking about implementing it," said Kenneth Calman, the Chief Medical Officer.

Norman Begg, consultant epidemiologist at the Public Health Laboratory Service, who is overseeing the trials, said: "This would be a major step forward. We are talking about a disease that is very serious. It is one of the last major childhood killers."

Most of the deaths are caused by two types of bacterial meningitis. There are

about 2,000 cases a year of meningitis B and meningitis C, and about 10 per cent of them end in fatalities.

Although traditionally two-thirds of the cases have been meningitis B, for which there is as yet no vaccine, cases of meningitis C have been on the increase. Last year, the Government put £1 million into accelerating work on the C group vaccine. "The results so far are very exciting," said Dr Salisbury. "Vaccinations at two years old appear to be giving fantastic levels of antibodies and appear very safe." The research had put the UK ahead of the rest of the world in meningitis C research.

Meningitis B will be harder to crack. There are about 30 different strains in the UK. But scientists of Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine are studying a vaccine developed in Cuba that seems to have virtually wiped out the disease there.

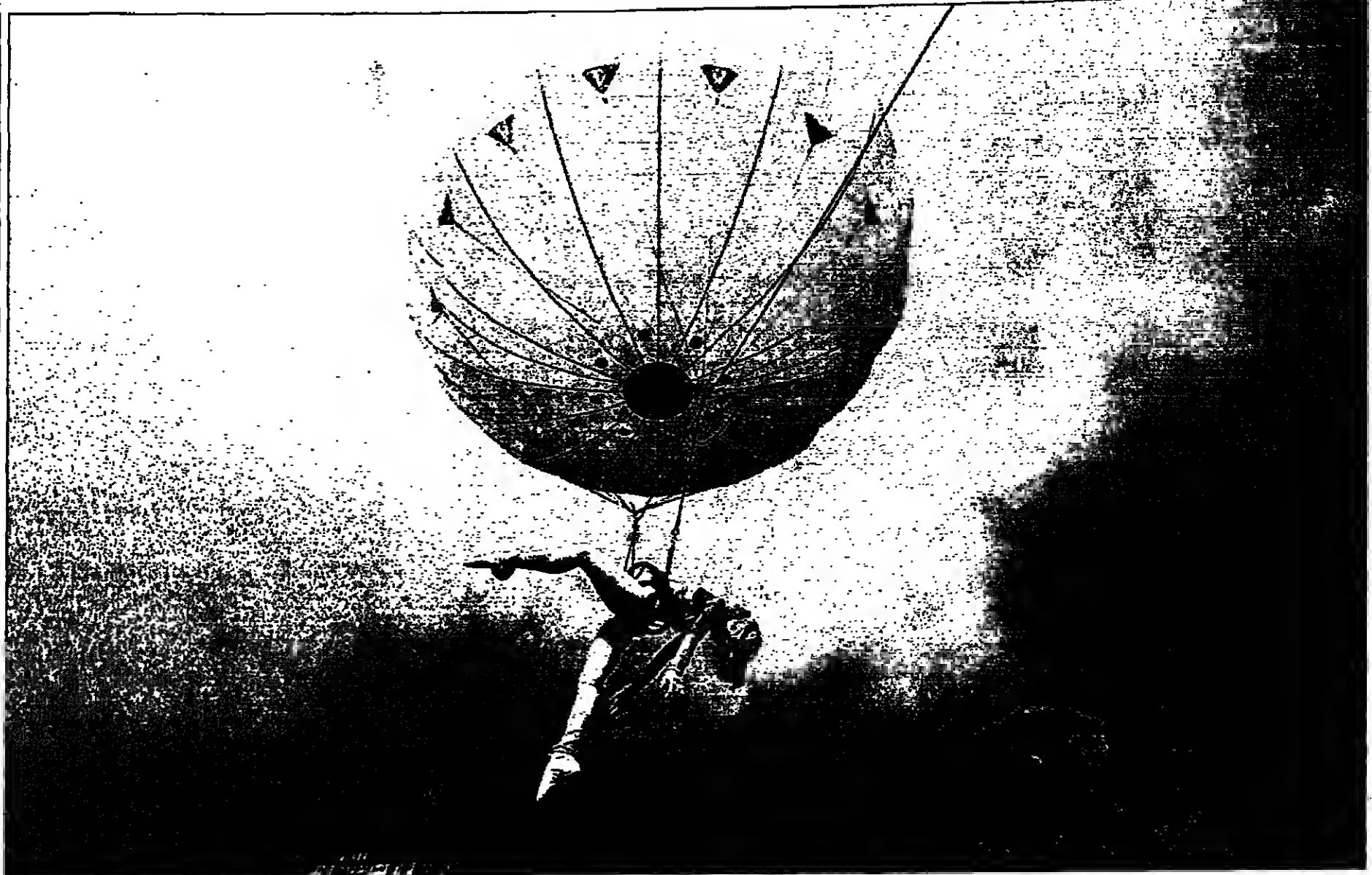
Sarah Morley, a team member, said children routinely immunised in Havana were being observed to assess the exposure they had had to different B strains. If the project goes well, a study may begin in the UK.

In spite of the recent furore over the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine, officials believe parents will be willing to have their children inoculated against meningitis C because they know the disease strikes fast and can kill if not detected.

The symptoms can be vague and vary between age groups. It begins as a flu-like illness, but progresses in young children to fever, irritability, restlessness, a high-pitched cry, vomiting and refusing food. Older people may get a severe headache, a dislike of bright lights, drowsiness or confusion and neck stiffness.

If red or purple spots appear on the skin and do not fade under pressure, the patient has blood poisoning, the septicaemic, life-threatening form of meningitis which progresses to shock, collapse, coma and death.

Campaigns by the Meningitis Research Foundation and the Meningitis Trust this autumn will stress the need for speedy action as swift medical attention often makes the difference between life and death.



Aerialist Kirsty Little performs under Steve Edgar's Dream Engine Heliosphere balloon as it is pulled through the streets in the Arundel Festival, West Sussex. PHOTOGRAPH: ROGER BAMBER

Manchester worst suicide blackspot

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

MANCHESTER has by far the worst suicide record in England and Wales, says a study which found that people in deprived areas are more at risk of taking their own lives.

Scotland has generally higher suicide rates than the remainder of the country and the Pennines emerges as an area where young men are particularly prone to die by their own hand.

The study, by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), analyses records of deaths between 1992 and 1996 where inquests recorded suicide or open verdicts. Suicide rates have been falling overall, but rose sharply to 1992 among

men aged between 15 and 44. In Scotland, however, rates among older people have not fallen and the levels for young Scots men and women have risen faster than elsewhere.

In a breakdown of local authority areas in England and Wales, Manchester — which recorded 415 suicides over the age of 15, from 1991 to 1996 — is the only area to have a significantly high suicide rate across the population.

One study estimated that one in 10 men in Manchester was clinically depressed. A 24-hour phone helpline for men in the city has been receiving 1,000 calls weekly since its launch last December.

According to today's analysis, published in Population Trends, an ONS journal, men in Manchester are up to 1.7 times more likely than average to commit suicide and

women are up to 2.3 times more likely to do so.

In the key 15 to 44 age group for men, six of the 19 areas with the highest suicide rates are in the Pennine region and a further four are in seaside resorts. The Pennine and seaside towns have higher than average levels of deprivation, as measured by unemployment, car-less households, numbers of lone-parent families, and incidence of limiting long-term illness.

At the other end of the scale, authorities with low suicide rates for young men are typically also low on the deprivation index. Of 39 authorities with significantly low rates almost a third are classified as "growth areas" in south and central England. The lowest rate among young men occurs in south Herefordshire, which recorded

Committing suicide

Number of suicides among men aged 15-44, England & Wales 1991-96, ranked according to rate

Worst	Best
Manchester 208	South Hams 1
Hastings 40	Tonbridge & Malling 13
Opstead, Croydon 37	Mid Dorset 20
Carmarthenshire 63	Purbeck, Dorset 4
Wish and Port Talbot 66	Wokingham 24
Doncaster 36	Bromley 47
Barrow-in-Furness 34	South Gloucestershire 39
Cardiff 74	Fenland, Cambs 10
Powder, Llanelli 34	North Devon 12
Torridge 86	Bosley 34

only four suicides in this group from 1991 and 1996 — compared to Manchester's 208. The traditional church wedding has been further undermined by marriages in

"approved premises" such as state homes and hotels. More than four in 10 weddings at the new licensed venues would otherwise have been in churches or temples.

according to an article in Population Trends. The marriage rate is the lowest since records began in 1838 and the number of weddings the fewest since 1917. Of those weddings that are taking place, a record 59 per cent are civil ceremonies. Of a provisional total of 270,000 weddings in 1996, 115,000 were religious ceremonies.

Since their introduction in 1995, more than 2,000 approved venues have been set up, offering a less formal alternative to register offices. The first one, and the first to stage a wedding, was "under the clock tower" in Wakefield, Yorkshire. People who marry at the new venues tend to be older, and probably one of each couple is divorced.

Population Trends 93; Stationery Office, £19

Save the Children

SUDAN
URGENT APPEAL



Photo: Neil Cooper

Today in Sudan 2.6 million people are in urgent need of food aid, and nearly half of these are at immediate risk from starvation. Children are suffering terribly. Right now the priorities are food and the need to provide protection and support to the children becoming separated from their families.

We have worked alongside the resourceful people of Sudan through many tough times in the past, but civil war and drought mean that the lives of many children depend, for now, on outside help.

As well as working closely with other charities active in the region to assist in the delivery of food aid and essential relief items, Save the Children is taking a lead role with unaccompanied children in Sudan.

Our staff are working around the clock providing immediate assistance, whilst also planning ahead for the future when the present chronic food needs have been met. We are:

- organising community kitchens to provide unaccompanied children with a regular food supply and offering particularly vulnerable children a secure base to stay

- supplying high energy biscuits for children

- providing experts to the UN World Food Programme to plan how to get the food to those who need it most, and supplying trucks to facilitate the distribution of food beyond the airstrips

- providing a water consultant to assess the problems of water supply systems and training local mobile teams to create and maintain new water sources

- distributing fishing equipment, community survival kits and other essential items to give help to families now and in the future.

We're pressing for peace as the only long term solution to the problems in Sudan. But meanwhile, we're doing all we can. We believe that the children of Sudan have the right to a childhood, as much as any child of any nation.

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Save the Children
Registered Charity No. 213890

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OR Please charge my: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐ Diners Club ☐ CAV ☐ Switch Issue No.

Credit Card Number/Switch Number:

Signature (Credit cards only) Card Expiry Date:

Please complete this coupon and return to: Save the Children, Dept. 8050569, FREEPOST, LONDON SE5 8BR

Thank you Registered Charity No. 213890

Teens ready to run risks of drug use

Duncan Campbell Crime Correspondent

TEENAGERS are not deterred from drug taking by the risk of arrest, according to a book published today. Alcohol is their most popular drug and regular teenage drinkers are consuming greater quantities than ever before, according to the survey.

By the age of 18, according to the report, around three out of 10 are regular illegal drug users and twice as many have tried illegal drugs. The survey found that the majority of teenagers made rational decisions on drug use on a "cost benefit" assessment, and were aware of the medical risks.

The book, *Illegal Leisure*, is an account of research over five years which started with a group of 700 14-year-olds at eight schools in the North-west of England. More than 500 stayed with the survey, which is the longest study of its kind in this country.

"We live in a society where recreational drug use is becoming normalised," said Fiona Measham, one of the

Why kids drink

Reasons for drinking alcohol. Percentage

	14-year-olds	15-year-olds	16-year-olds
Special occasions	67.6	65.6	58.7
It's fun	44.1	49.5	44.6
Makes me less shy	40.1	44.6	36.3
Friends drink	33.1	28.9	21.9
Like being drunk	26.4	32.9	26.4
Boredom	20.0	22.3	14.4
Helps 'beat up' people	19.0	22.1	19.1
Like pubs and clubs	16.9	24.0	19.7
Alcohol kept at home	7.1	5.8	5.5

How often

	Weekly	Occasional
14-year-olds	25.3	74.7
15-year-olds	22.3	77.7
16-year-olds	12.1	87.9
17-year-olds	6.2	93.8
18-year-olds	4.6	95.4

Source: *Illegal Leisure* by Duncan Campbell

study's authors. "There is a blurring between the illegal like cannabis and the legal like alcohol and tobacco."

Follow author, Judith Aldridge, said: "Most teenagers are careful and rational consumers, who plan their drug use to occur with friends and in places they feel safe and secure. They often report feeling relaxed, friendly, happy, carefree and confident. These good experiences many times outweigh the bad, especially for drugs like cannabis, amphetamines and ecstasy."

The book notes that the risk of being arrested, fined or jailed is not a major deterrent. "The illegality of drug use is rarely perceived as a key risk factor. This, interestingly, is despite the fact that, in 1996, 40,000 people were cautioned for cannabis possession in England and Wales, compared with 4,000 in 1986."

Alcohol, says the report, is

usually the first and the most widely used psychoactive drug tried by young people. Around 42 per cent nominated it or tobacco as their "favourite drug". One boy, asked to name his favourite drug, said: "Alcohol. Saying that, I'm not addicted to alcohol like I'm addicted to cigarettes. I really enjoy going out and getting legless because it's so social and you can have a good time."

From the age of 14, six out of 10 of those surveyed forgot things after drinking. About a third were worried about a sexual experience when drunk.

One girl said: "You know when you're out and that and you're bladdered and you think 'oh, that person's gorgeous', and then you come home and you don't remember a thing. And then when you're out the next week people say 'that's the fella you got off with', and you're just like 'oh, I never'."

The small minority who had never had a drink by the age of 16 gave religion, mainly Islam, as a main reason not to indulge.

Howard Parker of Manchester university, who led the study, said: "Young people make and remake decisions about drugs from when they reach secondary school right through adolescence and into their twenties... Even so we find young people who have said no to drugs right through their schooldays only to take their first B [ecstasy] in a nightclub during their first term at university."

The authors are critical of the current government strategy on drugs. "The important public policy issues — about how we deal with otherwise law-abiding young citizens caught with drugs in their possession, and about how we ensure the health and safety of young people who use drugs — remain unresolved."

"All that bra-buying and menstruation. He just didn't think it was right to be involved. But he stopped asking me about myself."
Daddy's girl

G2 page 10

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سكيا من الاجل

Blow dealt to party's economic standing □ Fear of crime alarmingly high □ Alan Travis reports on today's Guardian/ICM poll

Labour restores confidence in NHS

LABOUR has arrested the decline in public confidence in the National Health Service and in the state of the nation, according to a school system, according to a state of the nation Guardian/ICM opinion poll published today.

But the party's reputation for being good at running the economy has been dealt a body blow over the past year with a 15 point drop, from 50 to 35 per cent — in the percentage of voters who believe Labour has the best economic policy.

Ministers can take comfort though from the poll's findings that amid all the talk of recession, when the voters are asked about their family finances, 57 per cent say they have stayed the same. Only 1 per cent say their personal finances have worsened.

The Guardian/ICM state of the nation survey provides 12 key indicators on which to judge government performance.

The strengthening belief that the Government's counter-inflation policy should take priority over reducing unemployment is particularly significant as polling followed hard on the heels of the announced closure of the Japanese high technology factory in Tony Blair's Sedgefield constituency.

The poll also shows Britain as a country which favours higher taxes to pay for better public services, does not want to see the trade unions given more influence, but believes it is becoming a more modern democracy.

It also reveals that a growing minority believe Blair's Britain has not so far become a fairer or a more equal society. There remains a large majority which says the Gov-

ernment should give a higher priority to environmental policy even if it means penalising car drivers — the principle at the centre of John Prescott's delayed Transport Bill.

Perhaps one of the biggest changes in national attitudes in the last year revealed by the survey has been over food safety. Concerns over BSE and the fatal *E. coli* outbreak in Scotland seem to have finally struck home and for the first time a majority (52 to 32 per cent) say food is not becoming safer to eat.

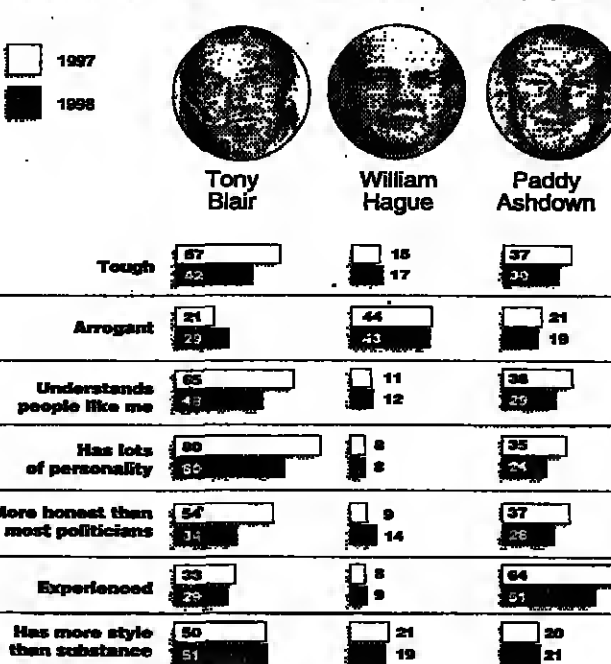
The ICM poll also shows an alarmingly high level of fear of crime. No fewer than 87 per cent of voters say "people are becoming more worried about falling victim to crime". Even though the recorded crime figures continue to decline, about 43 per cent of people say they "strongly agree" that they are more worried about crime.

This year's poll confirms the scale of the task facing William Hague as Conservative Party leader. Some 45 per cent of voters — up 4 per cent compared with a year ago — believe it will take two general elections or at least another nine years before the Tories are returned to power. Only one in 10 voters believe Mr Hague will become prime minister after the next election and one in four believe the Conservatives will be out of power for at least three elections. Among Tory voters the majority (53 per cent) — believe it will take at least two more elections to get the party back into power.

ICM interviewed a random sample of 1,178 adults by telephone between September 4-6. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults.

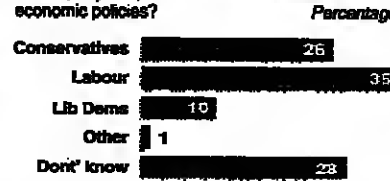
Party leaders How they compare

Percentage of respondents associating these descriptions with each party leader



State of the nation

Which party will produce the most successful economic policies?



Is the health service:



Is the education system:



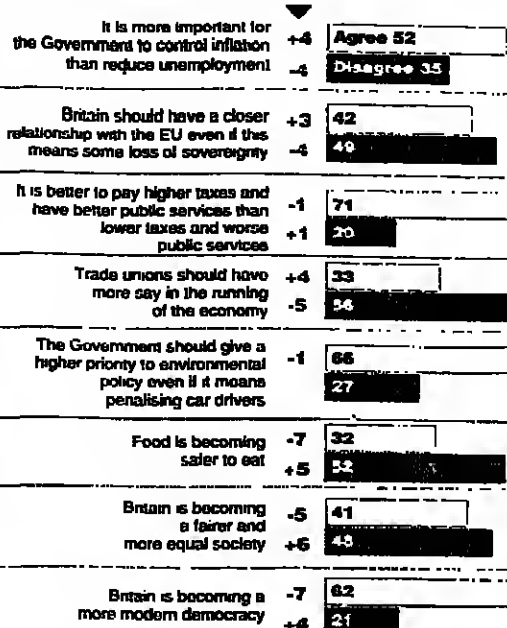
Are family finances:



National priorities

Percentage of respondents agreeing with the following statements

Percentage change, 1997-98



Thatcher backs Hague euro poll

Lucy Ward and Nicholas Watt

BARONESS Thatcher will today throw her weight behind William Hague's announcement of a snap ballot of the Tory membership to win approval of his headline stance on Europe.

Weeks after warning that Mr Hague will lose the next election, the former prime minister will endorse his decision to ask the party's 300,000 members to support his policy of ruling out membership of the European single currency during this Parliament and the next.

Lady Thatcher's move will be hailed as a great coup for Mr Hague because anti-Europeans on the Tory right, who believe his policy does not go far enough, will now follow her lead and fall into line behind the leadership.

In an interview last month the former prime minister

criticised Mr Hague's stance on Europe as too moderate and urged him to reject the single currency.

Mr Hague will launch his nationwide campaign for a Yes vote tonight with a speech to Tory party activists at Conservative Central Office. The leadership aims to build up a momentum for a strong Yes vote of well over 80 per cent by wheeling out a series of heavyweights, such as Lady Thatcher and Sir Malcolm Rifkind, the former foreign secretary, in support of Mr Hague.

The disclosure of Lady Thatcher's move, which follows John Major's decision to support Mr Hague, revived the spirits of the party leadership yesterday as the shadow cabinet started a two-day "brainstorming" summit in Aylesbury, Bucks. The leadership was irritated when grandees on the left of the party roared at Mr Hague's announcement on Monday.

Chris Patten, the party's former chairman and the last governor of Hong Kong, joined the ranks of Kenneth Clarke and John Gummer yesterday when he said the move would not end the internal debate. "A referendum on the single currency, which William Hague will certainly win, isn't going to stop people like Ken Clarke and Michael Heseltine... arguing a case they have been arguing about Europe for decades," he said.

"I would much prefer us to have tried to find an honourable compromise which would have put off any final decision and let the party fight... on different sides of a referendum while being totally united in a general election to get rid of the Blair government."

Mr Patten's criticisms will be taken seriously in private by the leadership. Mr Hague knows that Mr Patten commands enormous respect. The Tory leadership did

draw heart yesterday from John Major's decision to throw his weight behind Mr Hague's announcement. The former prime minister, whose leadership was crippled by endless rows over Europe, said: "European policy must be settled and accepted. We cannot afford a continuation of the disputes that crippled us in the last parliament."

But pro-Europeans maintained the pressure yesterday after party sources indicated that Mr Hague decided to hold the ballot to avoid a row at next month's Tory conference. Party sources had said the pro-European Conservative Mainstream Group, founded by Michael Heseltine, was planning a series of fringe meetings at the conference to attack Mr Hague's stance on the euro. But a spokesman for the group said none of its fringe meetings would concentrate on Europe, although the issue would be raised in wider discussions.

Gerard Soenen
Scotland Correspondent

THE Labour Party's hopes of rescuing its tarnished image in Scotland seemed to slip further yesterday as the first day of its inquiry into the conduct of the suspended MP Tommy Graham was obscured by claim, counter-claim and petty infighting.

Mr Graham arrived at Keltie House, the party's recently vacated headquarters, early yesterday morning apparently confident his name would be cleared.

"I have waited long enough for this. I am desperate to get in there and get the ball rolling," he said.

But by mid-afternoon it was clear that whatever the outcome of this hearing, Scottish Labour is going to have to handle its reputation, the confidence of the electorate.

As Mr Graham prepared to

face the National Constitutional Committee he said he was confident of acquittal.

"I am now going to have my say for the first time in 12 months. I am confident I will get acquitted. I am determined to see my name cleared," he said.

Under Labour Party rules Mr Graham and the party can call up to eight witnesses, but Scottish Labour have refused to say which, and how many, they will be calling.

Scottish Labour has consistently refused to comment on the inquiry until it has drawn its conclusions. It is becoming less clear what exactly the party has charged Mr Graham with.

It is understood that the MP for West Renfrewshire faces a total of five charges.

Two are thought to relate to sexually compromising gay photographs of a trade union official which Mr Graham is alleged to have offered to two other trade union officials in

return for the personnel file on his opponent for the Labour candidacy.

However by yesterday afternoon these charges appeared, under the veil of secrecy thrown around them, to be in tatters.

Jim Devine, a former chairman of the Scottish Labour Party and aide to the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, left Keltie House after alleging that the claims of a key witness to this charge were false.

"It was alleged that I had leaked information to a national newspaper in relation to the sexuality and sexual behaviour of a prominent trade union official. That information was false," said Mr Devine.

After this statement, it appears unlikely that the Labour Party will be able to prove any of the charges relating to the photographs, if indeed the photographs exist.

The decision of Mr Devine

to testify after claims made in newspapers of vendettas appears to have rubbed salt in the wounds of a divided Scottish party.

The second two charges which Mr Graham is understood to face refer to the Paisley North MP Irene Adams. Mr Graham is alleged to have attempted to unseat her by paying the fees of bogus members in her constituency. He is also accused of bad-mouthing Mrs Adams, a friend of the former Paisley South MP Gordon McMaster whose suicide note implied Mr Graham had been behind a smear campaign against him.

The final charge facing Mr Graham — who could be expelled after 33 years of membership of the party — is thought to be a general one of bringing the party into disrepute.

Whatever the outcome, Mr Graham yesterday vowed he would not resign his seat and would continue as an MP.

Case 1

Iyabo Oba (right) was brought up an Anglican but lost interest as a teenager. Curious to learn more about her faith, after finding herself thinking about it in her final year at Essex university, she took a course at Holy Trinity Brompton a year ago.

"Alpha clarified various points," she said. "They talked about it in a simple way. I was in a group of similar age, 20-27, and background. Many of us had come from university, and we discussed the major questions over a meal."

"They explained key areas such as the historical background to Christianity and beliefs. We discussed things, and lots of people had a lot of questions. You become friends and you start hanging out together."

Ms Oba, aged 24, said her friends had noticed a difference in her: "They say I'm far more forgiving now and that I'm more honest."

She believes her renewed faith has helped her to get a sense of direction. "I had a lot of student debt and nothing to go to. Now I've a nice job. I pray every day, and there's definitely a connection."



Case 2

Jeremy Gilmer (right) was a lapsed Catholic. "My life had hit a brick wall. I had a nervous breakdown three years ago. I had everything: a nice lifestyle, nice car, good job, thousands in the bank. I had come to the end of a journey of achievement... but things suddenly seemed empty. The 'meaning of life' is such a cliché, but that was what I was looking for."

"A friend told me about Alpha. Before, I was Mr Cynical. But Alpha took the dog collar and dogma out of religion; you felt free to talk, laugh, cry — express yourself. It reconnected my head with my heart."

"My head had seen everything like a quick fix, like a drug. When I bought a car, I began thinking about buying another. But my heart said that's not all there is. 'I still have a nice car, job and house, but... they are no longer as important.'"

Mr Gilmer, who works in advertising and did an Alpha course in Bath six months ago, now attends an Anglican church.

Interview by Madeleine Bunting



Churches pool cash for Alpha course advert campaign

Madeleine Bunting
Religious Affairs Editor

FOUR thousand churches of all denominations have pooled £1 million to fund the biggest Christian advertising campaign ever run in Britain, to promote the evangelical course Alpha.

Billboard posters with questions such as "9 to 5 for the next 30 years. Surely

there's more to life?" and "You're born. You live. You die. End of story?" are going up on more than 1,700 sites from Monday to advertise the start of Alpha courses in more than 5,000 churches at the end of the month. The posters will also be displayed at the churches.

Since 1993 more than 800,000 people have completed the introductory course on Christianity, which originated in the Church of Eng-

land's fastest-growing church, Holy Trinity Brompton in Kensington, west London. Churches also plan to deliver 4½ million leaflets through letterboxes, inviting people to take the 10-week courses. Adverts will run in 188 regional newspapers, giving details of where they are being held.

"There is an extraordinary spiritual hunger in people who want an opportunity to explore the meaning of life," said the Rev Nicky Gumbel,

curate of Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB) and architect of the course's exponential success, who believes the "spiritual climate of the country" is ready for this initiative.

"There's an increasing number of people who don't have much church background. They've experienced the materialism and they've explored the New Age and have discovered that those things don't satisfy. They wonder if there is something

in orthodox Christianity, and we are trying to give them an opportunity to understand what that is about."

Alpha, which began as a Christian refresher course for HTB parishioners 20 years ago, has been taken up by other churches since 1993. Now 6,149 churches of many denominations, including Roman Catholic, are registered as using the formula of teaching and discussing Christian doctrine and prac-

tice over a meal in a private home. It uses hospitality and friendship networks to bring people into church.

There are to be 120 national prayer meetings from Truro to Inverness on September 19 to pray for the success of Alpha's national launch. HTB's vicar, the Rev Sandy Miller, said there was now a course within striking distance of virtually everyone.

Mr Miller and Mr Gumbel — who both gave up careers

as barristers to become Anglican priests — said the course was a chance for people to ask questions about the meaning and purpose of life. They admitted that their aim was to convert people to Christianity and fill church pews.

The ingredients of Alpha were: "A for anyone, I for learning and laughter, P for pasta, H for helping one another and A for asking any questions."

Churches which have con-

ducted the course report conversions and fresh commitment from members. It has enthusiastic support from church leaders including the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Basil Hume.

Critics claim that Alpha is not as open-ended as it claims, to be, considering that the underlying objective is clearly to convert.

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'I am acting to prevent huge mobs of hungry Russians taking to streets'

James Meek in Moscow

REGIONAL bosses from Siberia to the Baltic stepped gingerly into the power vacuum left by Moscow's political bickering yesterday as the economic crisis began to bite deeply into the lives of ordinary Russians.

With President Boris Yeltsin dallying over his third and final attempt to steer a prime ministerial nominee through parliament, and two of the most likely candidates shying away from the poisoned chalice of heading a crisis cabinet, anxious provincial governors began taking the law into their own hands.

In the detached Russian enclave of Kaliningrad, on the Baltic coast between Poland and Lithuania, Governor Leonid Gorbunov declared what he called a "state of emergency", although technically

only the president has the right to do this.

A statement from the governor's office called on the people of Kaliningrad, which is roughly 300 miles west of Russia proper, to observe order and not to hoard food.

The state of emergency was aimed at building up a regional reserve of food and fuel, controlling prices and ensuring essential supplies to schools and hospitals.

Similar measures have been taken across the country. In Krasnoyarsk in Siberia, Governor Alexander Lebed froze prices for gas, petrol, electricity and local transport, and said the prices for locally produced goods and essential foodstuffs would be controlled by decree.

"By regulating prices, I certainly place myself on the brink of violating the law," the general-turned-politician said yesterday. "But... I am determined to prevent starvation in the region."

Muscovites change tack to drop the dollar and join rush for roubles

LONG lines snaked on from exchange booths in Moscow yesterday as residents tried to snap up quickly disappearing banknotes.

They were not looking for dollars but roubles, and exchange booths were running out. In one Moscow neighbourhood three out of 10 had none.

"Last week everyone was running around hunting for

dollars, and today they're all running around hunting for roubles," said Natasha Radion, a clerk in a tiny exchange booth.

The shift is surprising as the rouble has done nothing but fall in the past few weeks, losing more than half its value and spurring demand for dollars.

"There's certainly a pattern to it," Ms Radion said. "Almost everybody

who comes here is selling dollars now."

The rush for roubles is partly to do with widely different exchange rates across the city. Ms Radion's was unusually good: 20 roubles to the dollar. In other booths it was less than 15 to the dollar.

As it is illegal to make purchases in dollars, they must be exchanged for roubles before people go

shopping. With the rate fluctuating by the day, they are changing only small amounts at a time.

The rush for dollars is also slowing as people wait for the rouble to rebound. Officials have encouraged this hope, suggesting it may be undervalued.

But tomorrow, said Ms Radion, shoppers could be clamouring for dollars again. — A.P. Moscow.

din, whom parliament had rejected for a second time on Monday. But the president's failure to renominate him immediately suggested he was not a serious contender, considering other candidates.

The two who emerged as front-runners on Monday, the acting foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov, and Moscow's mayor, Yuri Luzhkov, sounded less than enthusiastic about heading a crisis government.

The Duma leader who put Mr Primakov's name forward, the liberal Grigory Yavlinsky, had not, it turned out, cleared the idea with the ex-Soviet intelligence chief himself.

"I'm grateful to all those who have suggested my candidacy," said the 68-year-old, regarded with hostility by the American right for his attempts to talk peace with Saddam Hussein. "However, I must unequivocally state: I cannot agree to this."

Mr Luzhkov was less categorical. He simply said that there had been no discussions of his possible nomination. "I'm already head of the Moscow government. Is that so little?" he said.

Nonetheless, leaders of the lower house of parliament, the Duma, lined up yesterday to offer support to Mr Luzhkov or Mr Primakov as alternatives to Mr Chernomyrdin.

This in itself may make it hard for the proud, stubborn Mr Yeltsin to nominate either man. He does not want to be seen to be bowing to Duma initiatives.

Yet there are signs that parliament means business this time and is ready to reject Mr Chernomyrdin again. If the president offers him in that event Mr Yeltsin would be forced to dissolve the Duma and call new elections, leading to further political uncertainty, considerable expenditure and, eventually, a legislature even more hostile than the present one.



A striking German lorry driver carrying his union's flag walks along a line of jammed traffic at Strasbourg, near the Europe Bridge that straddles the Rhine PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTIAN LUTZ

Striking lorry drivers bring chaos to Channel ports

Jon Henley in Paris and Martin Walker in Brussels

WITH militant French lorry drivers in the vanguard, road haulage drivers across Europe staged a co-ordinated day of protest yesterday, setting up partial blockades at main border crossings and causing familiar scenes of chaos at many Channel ports.

Organised by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), the protests were aimed at raising awareness of the dangerously long hours worked by lorry drivers rather than at paralysing the continent's traffic.

But in France more than 100 "filter barricades", which allow private cars through but block heavy goods traffic, were in place, with the Channel ports of Caen, Cherbourg, Dieppe and Le Havre badly hit.

"They are letting some passengers through but at the moment it's chaos: there are very large traffic jams all around the port," said a spokeswoman for P&O European Ferries at Cherbourg.

The European Commission yesterday threatened legislation on maximum working hours to end of more strikes, unless the unions and employers reached agreement by the end of this month.

Despite the day-long strike, the European Union transport commissioner, Neil Kinnock, was yesterday confident the two sides were close to an overall agreement.

Hitherto excluded from EU rules on maximum working hours, the road transport industry is being brought into the system by the commission, under a flexible rule that requires no more than 48 hours a week averaged out over four months.

But drivers across Europe fear job losses and worse working conditions if employers of big firms, which keep to the time limits, are undercut by smaller firms. They also fear the impact of cabotage,

under which a lorry driver picks up sub-loads on different parts of the route, although the commission says this accounts for less than 1 per cent of the tonne-miles hauled in the EU.

Disruptive strikes by French lorry drivers have become a daily feature of European transport, provoking ritual wrangling by the commission, which upholds the right to strike but deplores the blocking of transport in Europe's single market.

Delays of more than four hours were reported at the Franco-Spanish border towns of Irun, La Jonquera and Bixtorta, where Spanish drivers joined forces with the French.

Three Franco-German frontier points were blocked, and problems were encountered at Italian, Swiss and Belgian crossings into France.

Protests at Calais were limited to a leafleting campaign. By a local union organiser, Robert Duron, said blockades could be mounted if employers and governments did not take steps to legislate on working hours.

"It is regrettable the British lorry drivers are not joining in," he said.

French drivers, whose bitter pay disputes have brought the country to its knees twice in the past two years, are solidly behind the ITF protest as a means of pressing their own

demands for Europe-wide legislation on working hours. French drivers are theoretically restricted to a 48-hour week, and want similar laws introduced across the EU to escape unfair competition.

The London-based ITF says lorry drivers in many countries are often forced to work more than 100 hours a week, and that fatigue causes countless fatal accidents.

The British Freight Transport Association predicted the day of action could cost British industry £1 million, prompting the Transport Minister, John Reid, to call on the European Commission to act promptly to end the legality of the protests.

Nigeria frees 20 Ogonis jailed with Saro-Wiwa

Ian Black Diplomatic Editor

NIGERIA'S new military leader has freed 20 Ogoni minority activists, imprisoned with the executed writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and held since 1984 on charges of murdering four pro-government chiefs, it was announced yesterday.

The 20 were released by a court in the south-eastern city of Port Harcourt on Monday, in a further sign that General Abdulsalam Abubakar is pursuing relatively liberal policies.

A statement issued by the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) said the detainees were released unconditionally and were receiving urgent medical care.

Under Saro-Wiwa's leadership, MOSOP mounted a national and international campaign against pollution of the lands of the 500,000-strong Ogoni minority by the oil giant Royal Dutch/Shell in the Niger Delta.

Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogonis were executed in defiance of worldwide pleas for clemency in November 1995. Nigeria was then suspended from the Commonwealth and sanctions were imposed in a vain and politically divisive attempt to force Nigeria back on to the democratic path.

According to MOSOP, the 20 were tortured and held in solitary confinement in inhuman conditions, sharing their cells with rats, snakes and cockroaches, with their only source of water a well used to dump dead inmates.

"You were never sure of your life for the next minute," Nyieda Nankpo, one of those freed, said last night. "It was very horrible."

Confirmation of the releases will boost hopes for further change since General Abubakar, aged 58, a former army chief of staff, took over after the sudden death of Sani

Abacha last June. Gen Abubakar has already promised to hand over to an elected ruler next May. On Monday, at his first press conference since assuming power, he released the draft constitution for the next civilian government which his predecessor had kept under wraps.

A delighted Anita Roddick, founder of the Body Shop, who has been active in campaigning on behalf of the Ogonis, said yesterday: "On the gallows our friend Ken Saro-Wiwa called on all of us to continue the struggle for the Ogoni people. Their release is a huge step forward in securing justice for them and it must not be the last."

'You were never sure of your life for the next minute. It was very horrible'

On Monday Gen Abubakar promised he would not allow any repeat of the human rights abuses committed by the previous regime. He said those who misused funds during the rule of his late predecessor were under investigation and that foreign countries were helping track down missing cash.

Thousands of Nigerians flocked to the capital, Abuja, yesterday for the launch of the second main party expected to contest the forthcoming elections. The All People's Party and the People's Democratic Party, already dominate the terrain and group most of the veterans from previous failed attempts to end army rule.

Nether has yet articulated clear policies or programmes, although both have tried to ensure a following from across a country where party politics usually end up in ethnic horse-trading.

Belgrade 'blocks food to Kosovo'

Kurt Schork in Ostrozhub and Paul Webster in Paris

SCORES of terrified civilians fled yet another village in central Kosovo yesterday as international human rights activists warned that Serbian leaders in Belgrade had deliberately blocked the distribution of medical and food supplies.

"The situation has deteriorated," the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues and Danielle Mitterrand's France Liberté said in a joint report.

"International warnings, threats of economic sanctions and military intervention have achieved nothing. President [Slobodan] Milosevic continues to defy international opinion and lie openly while making it impossible for the Albanian population to return to their homes."

In Geneva United Nations relief agencies issued an ap-

peal for \$54.3 million (\$33 million) to help 270,000 displaced people and avert a "humanitarian tragedy" in the coming winter.

Sadako Ogata, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, said: "Adequate funding is critical to avert further tragedy in the freezing hills where tens of thousands of displaced people are huddling."

Serbian police advanced on the village of Ostrozhub along the only paved road in or out. Albanian residents fled in vehicles along a dirt track leading north until they came to the edge of a cliff impassable except on foot.

Serbian infantry firing automatic weapons advanced on the group of about 1,000 villagers, forcing them to flee down the cliff to the fields and forests outside Ponorac. Then they systematically burned their vehicles and belongings.

Kurt Schork is a reporter for Reuters.

Congo peace summit falls apart amid accusations of treachery

Andrew Meldrum in Victoria Falls

THE summit of seven African presidents aimed at stopping the war in Congo hurried from near breakthrough, with a peace plan ready for signing, to breakdown when the Congolese rebels abruptly quit the talks yesterday.

The negotiations at the Victoria Falls resort in Zimbabwe ended in a stalemate, with the leaders managing only to agree to a ceasefire in principle, with a new round of negotiations needed to work out the specifics — though a cessation of fighting seemed highly unlikely.

The rebel representatives left the summit after being blocked from holding direct talks with the man they are fighting to oust — Congo's president, Laurent Kabila.

"They will only know we exist when we start shooting," said the rebel leader, Bizima Karaha. One of his colleagues added: "We are go-

ing back home now to do one thing only: to intensify our campaign against Kabila."

If this was not enough to make any ceasefire plan look remote, recriminations between officials of countries at the summit added to the gloomy outlook: charges of genocide, ethnic violence, treachery and lying were exchanged following the close of the talks. There were also

of the Organisation of African Unity in Addis Ababa. They are supposed to work out ceasefire details.

All this is a far cry from Monday night when a draft peace plan was printed and circulated for signing in the morning. Instead, the rebels of the Congolese Democratic Coalition (RCD) pulled out. President Kabila refused to accept that they should take

Ostracised rebels quit and head home 'to intensify campaign against Kabila'

reports of renewed fighting in eastern Congo by Rwandan and Ugandan forces, and air strikes by Angola.

Even so, ministers of defence of the seven countries at the summit — Congo and its allies, Namibia, Angola and Zimbabwe, as well as Uganda and Rwanda supporting the rebels on the other side, and Zambia taking a neutral stance — are to start meeting tomorrow at the headquarters

part in the talks with the assembled African presidents, Zimbabwe and Angola backed him and the rebels had to sit in a separate room. The chairman of the meeting, President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia, would brief them on the proceedings. Zimbabwean police prevented journalists from speaking to them.

"How can we be bound by a ceasefire agreement that has been negotiated behind our

backs?" asked Mr Karaha, as he marched out of his hotel yesterday. "The only Congolese in the talks is Kabila, who has been killing our people."

Once the rebels left, things fell apart. The rebels' Ugandan and Rwandan supporters objected to the peace plan as drafted.

"The leaders had a golden opportunity to hear the case of the principal participants in the conflict, the rebels. But the summit chose not to hear their grievances," said Joseph Bideri, spokesman for President Pasteur Bizimungu of Rwanda.

Mr Bideri accused President Kabila of using Congo's state media to urge citizens to take up arms and kill all Tutsi people in the country.

On the other side, officials of Mr Kabila's government said the rebels were puppets of Uganda and Rwanda. Congo's foreign minister, Jean-Charles Okoto Lolombe, said the two countries were "talking peace here in Victoria Falls but they are making war there in the Congo."

"Promoting Good Practice" NATIONAL SOCIAL INCLUSION CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN LIVERPOOL 17 - 18 SEPTEMBER 1998

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Organised by Liverpool Housing Action Trust, Liverpool City Council and Communities Against Poverty.

Bread

News in brief

Palestine and Israel 'ignore human rights'

HUMAN rights have been continually sacrificed in the name of "security" by both Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the five years since the Oslo agreement was signed, an Amnesty International report says today.

More than 10,000 Palestinians have been arrested by the Israeli security forces and routinely tortured under interrogation since the Oslo agreement in 1993, according to the report. Since 1994 the Palestinian Authority has detained without charge or trial hundreds of Palestinians opposed to the peace process. — *David Sharrock, Jerusalem.*

Nazi loot may be returned

HUNDREDS of art works seized by the Nazis during the second world war and now in Austrian museums could be returned to their owners under a law being submitted to the Austrian government tomorrow. The law may be passed by October.

Austria began investigating its state collections after two paintings on loan to the Museum of Modern Art in New York were confiscated by the US authorities in January because they were claimed by the heirs of Nazi victims. — *Reuters, Vienna.*

50 die in bus crash

AT LEAST 50 people have been killed and 30 injured in south-east Brazil after a lorry carrying diesel crashed into two buses carrying pilgrims back from the Basilica of Our Lady of Aparecida, a shrine to Brazil's patron saint. The disaster was the second in three days involving religious worshippers. On Saturday, 24 people died and nearly 500 were injured when the roof of a church on the outskirts of Sao Paulo caved in. — *Reuters, Sao Paulo.*

Teenager held over shootings

A TEENAGER has been arrested in connection with the murder of six people in three different parts of suburban Denver. He is being questioned about the shooting of a woman, two teenagers and three men. Police had begun looking for another 18-year-old whom they said was the link between the killings, then found he was among the victims. — *Reuters, Denver.*

Sierra Leone 16 appeal

THE 16 civilians condemned to death last month for collaborating with the leaders of the 1997 coup in Sierra Leone have appealed against their sentences. It was unclear when the appeal court would hear the case. If the appeal fails, the accused can turn to the supreme court, and finally the president. — *Reuters, Freetown.*

Cambodian protest quelled



CAMBODIAN police wielding cattle prods cleared hundreds of demonstrators from outside parliament yesterday (a sugarcane vendor is chased, above). But authorities backed down on a threat to arrest an opposition leader who organised the two-week-old protest. Police used water cannons on protesters in "Democracy Square" against alleged fraud in July elections. Prime Minister Hun Sen had announced their leader Sam Rainsy would be arrested. Officials said yesterday there were no such plans. — *Nick Cumming-Bruce, Phnom Penh.*

Maidens' prayers answered

TWENTY men attending a weekend prayer service at a mosque in Garissa, eastern Kenya, returned home with a bride each and 20,000 shillings (about £210) for a honeymoon as a gift from the imam.

During the service, the cleric announced he had 20 young women seeking husbands and called for unmarried men to step forward. He married them on the spot to the women "to reduce immorality in the town". He had heard the women were going to an army camp to seek husbands. — *AP, Nairobi.*

Culinary revolution

A MOSCOW art gallery owner has been questioned by state prosecutors after a life-sized cake depicting Vladimir Lenin was eaten by guests and art critics at a recent exhibition. Communist MPs complained that Sergei Tarasov broken the law against insulting a national figure. He said the cake, designed by the artist Yuriy Shabalinov, symbolised the end of the 20th century and Lenin's pivotal role in it. — *AP, Moscow.*

Shark 'killed divers'

TWO United States divers who were left behind on Australia's Great Barrier Reef by their charter boat were probably eaten by a tiger shark, an inquest in Cairns heard yesterday. The inquest will also investigate how the boat returned to port without noticing that Thomas and Eileen Loughran were not aboard and why no alarm was raised for two days. — *Reuters, Sydney.*

The ancient train of empire that carries Eritrea's new dreams

Eritrea is one of the poorest countries in the world. Yet David Hirst in Asmara finds it using self-reliance to build a society free of many of the problems of developing nations

SO HOW old is this lathe, I asked Seyum Beraki, foreman at the Asmara workshops of Eritrean Railways, pointing to an antique contraption buzzing merrily at the end of a strap attached to a motor on the ceiling?

Well, he said, it was already quite old when he began work there. That was in 1940. Eritrea was an Italian colony. Its railway was a triumph of Italian engineering. In less than 30 miles it rises a spectacular 7,500ft, from the sweltering Red Sea port of Massawa to the blessed cool of the highland capital, Asmara.

With Eritrea's fall to the British in 1941, and its absorption into Ethiopia some 10 years later, the railway kept going until the 1970s when, in the war between Ethiopia and its rebellious province, both sides ripped up every rail and metal sleeper in the land for use in trenches and fortifications.

After victory in the liberation war in 1991, the new-born Eritrean state received foreign offers to rebuild the railway. "It would have cost us at least \$200 million (£130 million)," the railway chief, Ammanuel Selassie, said. "It was just too damned expensive, so we decided to do it for ourselves."

There can be few relics of the stars era like the 40-tonne Giovanni Ansaldo, Genoa 1937, or the 30-tonne Ernesto Breda, Milan 1927, outside railway museums, and surely none being restored as an integral part of a country's transport system.

Eritrean Railways boasts some 20 of these great machines. Some look decrepit; others gleam proudly in freshly painted livery of red and black. The men, like Mr Beraki, who wrought this transformation are older than the locomotives.

YOUNGER generations have been scouring former battlefields for rail and sleeper, then laying them anew in their original locations. It will cost Eritrea nothing in foreign expertise, and a few million pounds for a track-laying machine and the nuts and bolts.

It is a picturesque metaphor for this African country, so different from almost any other, so much at variance with the familiar Western perceptions of a continent sunk in calamities — natural and man-made — hunger, debt, civil war.

Statistically, Eritrea is one of the world's poorest countries. One can just about believe that in the countryside, where farmers still work their rugged little highland plots with yoked oxen and primitive wooden ploughs. But it's harder in the towns.

It is not necessary to arrive in an Asmara at war from the anarchy of supposedly more sophisticated capitals such as Cairo or Beirut to wonder at the order and cleanliness of the place, its well-kept public gardens, at the mere existence, let alone functioning,

of such services, virtually unknown in the Middle East, as public telephone booths, at the few, unnamed policemen directing well-disciplined traffic. There are virtually no beggars, and virtually no crime.

The secret of this African miracle is rooted in the fact that Eritrea was the last African state to win independence and the first to do so from another African state, and that it did so in one of the most remarkable "people's wars" ever waged.

"Doing it ourselves" — as the railway chief said — sums it up: self-reliance, ingrained, passionate, stubborn to the point of masochism, lies at the heart of the "ethics of the bush". It was fuelled by the loneliness of that 30-year epic. It has left Eritreans deeply anchored in themselves and their experience. So it's almost a fetish of their leadership that, while open to the world, it doesn't accept "models", or formulae, of any kind.

The country has yet to ratify a constitution. It is typical that the leadership should have taken so long, and brought the entire people into a great debate about it. "They sometimes study things to excess here," said a Western banker, "but it pays off. President [Isaias] Afewerki rightly says Eritrea is like the tortoise that gets there in the end."

The Eritrean solution is clearly not a fully-fledged, functioning democracy by the criteria of multi-party pluralism, independent media, civil society.

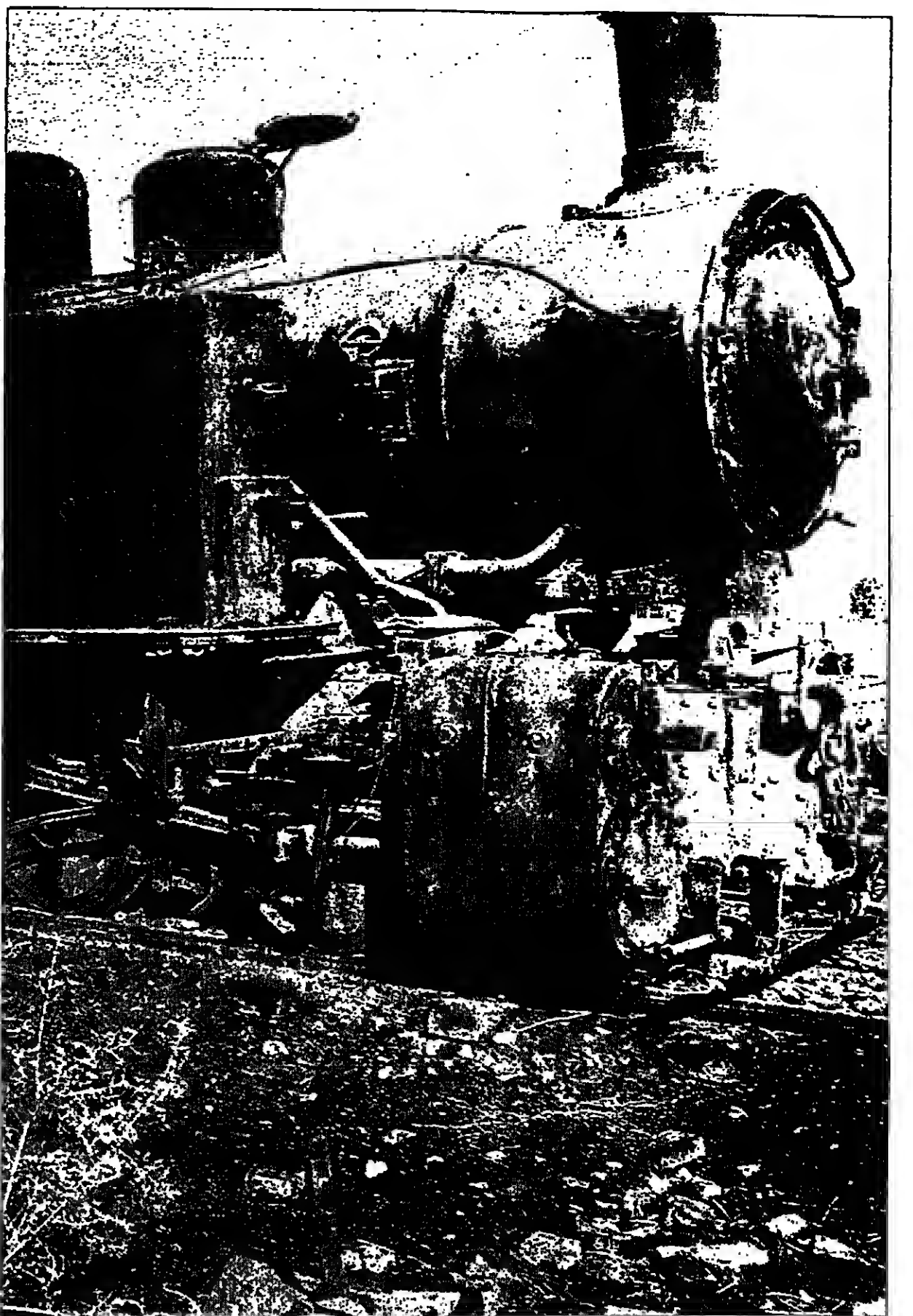
"We think all Eritreans should have the right to establish parties," said Yemani Gebreab, a presidential adviser. "But we also think that having parties for its own sake is meaningless. More important is to ensure the continuous engagement of the population in political life."

All the former guerrilla fighters worked for nothing till 1996 and then took salaries of which the highest — the president's — is about \$250.

"Most African leaders are emperors," said a Sudanese opposition leader, marvelling at the modesty of Eritrea's ruling class. A minister makes an appointment to see you in the simplest of lean-to shops outside his residence. There are no cars, and even in new buildings, no lift to a minister's fourth-floor office.

Such a life-style is one reason why the regime is highly popular and respected. Pure itself, it can demand high standards from others. President Afewerki has said Africa's curse is not this or that aim or objective, but the corruption of regimes that embody them.

Another African, Martyn Ngunya, head of the United Nations Development Programme in Asmara, bears lyrical witness to the "corruption-free" development of Eritrea. "Eritrea has achieved. He says: 'Here they fight corruption better even than Canada or the US; the



A steam engine built in Italy after the first world war symbolises the Eritrean 'tortoise that gets there in the end'

convergence between what they say and what they actually do is almost complete."

The country's youth is assiduously schooled in the ethics of the bush. National youngsters lay railway tracks, build scores of micro-dams, repair hundreds of miles of hillside terraces and plant millions of trees in a country whose forest cover was reduced by war from 30 per cent of the land surface to less than 1 per cent.

Not for Eritreans anything that smacks of the "aid dependency", the crippling indebtedness, of so many African countries.

THE government took food distribution out of the hands of foreign donors, and sought to shift the country by swift, perhaps avoidably harsh, stages from an internationally relief-based economy to a locally productive one.

Insisting that all who could should work for a living, it instituted a programme of "work for food", then "work for money", then stopped distributing aid altogether. It rejected aid or development projects it did not control.

Outside control and supervision, said the Eritreans, might be valid in other parts of Africa but, theirs being a wholly honest administration, they were not valid here. "It's great to work for a government that truly leads," Mr Ngunya said.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has granted Eritrea a privileged status all its own. "The work ethic here is amazing," said the foreign banker. "Last year there were two cases of fraud; you probably have 50 a day in Nigeria. And people pay their taxes."

Not just easily levied indirect taxes, but progressive, personal income tax of up to 49 per cent. In the West that might seem unremarkable; here it's another of the attainments that set Eritrea apart. These are many indeed. Unfortunately, the greatest and most obvious are still the military ones. That was proved once again in the past two months by the seeming ease with which a people of 3 million more than held their own in battle against Ethiopia's 60 million.

It will take time for qualities that serve so well in war to yield their peacetime fruits. But, said the banker, "come back in 30 years, and I guarantee the tortoise will have more than arrived."

And perhaps, by then, Eritrea will have become that African model it could not discern anywhere else.

Moroccans stuck between the Rock and a hard place

Adela Gooch in Madrid

GIBRALTAR'S Moroccan immigrants, already stripped of permanent residence rights, found themselves further marginalised yesterday when a pensioner's plea for benefits was rejected.

Gibraltar's supreme court ruling, which affects about 4,000 pensioners and resident guest workers, bars Fatima Ouzma, aged 68, from entitlement to health care. She will have to survive on a basic pension of \$74 a month.

New immigration rules adopted by the Gibraltar government deprive immigrants of residency rights once they retire. Residency passes are replaced with visitor cards giving access to the British colony but nothing more.

Workers' dependants are denied resident status. Those returning from Morocco often have their passports confiscated to stop them crossing into Europe. A spokesman for Mrs Ouzma's lawyers said: "She has paid her full social security contribution and is entitled to claim her benefits."

human rights monitor said. "This was a case where by decree without a proper hearing in the assembly because Gibraltar just doesn't have enough money to meet pension requirements and the British government refuses to help."

The Moroccan workers are victims of an agreement between Britain and Spain to ensure Spanish workers excluded from the Rock in 1969 received pensions even though they had contributed relatively little to Gibraltar's pension fund.

To limit the amount payable, the Gibraltar government froze the basic rate of pensions and set up a "discretionary" fund to provide top-up coverage for full Gibraltar citizens.

The acting chief justice, Felix Pizarro, ruled that Mrs Ouzma had no entitlement to workers' rights, such as health care, because she had retired and the benefits were tied to being a worker.

Foreign Office wants Sudan links restored

Ian Black, Diplomatic Editor

BRITAIN is hoping for a quick restoration of full relations with Sudan despite both countries having recalled their ambassadors after Tony Blair backed last month's attack by the United States on a Khartoum pharmaceutical factory.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, is planning to meet his Sudanese counterpart at the United Nations in New York at the end of the month, a clear signal that Britain wants business as usual as soon as possible.

Omar Bireedo, Sudan's ambassador to Britain, yesterday paid a farewell call on a Foreign Office minister, Derek Fatchett, and both said they hoped that the withdrawal was temporary. "We hope to be able to get back to normal soon," an official said.

Publicly, Britain supported the US missile attacks on Afghanistan and Sudan on August 20 — retaliation for what Mr Blair called the "evil crimes" of the bombing on August 7 of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. But in the Foreign Office there is

scepticism about the justification for targeting the Khartoum plant.

The US showed Britain its evidence of production of what it had said were components for chemical weapons at the Shifa factory, allegedly part-owned or financed by the Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden. But Whitehall officials admit privately questioning how compelling this evidence

Diplomats are sceptical about US evidence justifying Khartoum attack

was. Support for Washington, they acknowledge, may have been a knee-jerk response by an instinctively pro-US Downing Street.

Reports from the US have suggested that a soil sample taken by a CIA agent may not have been conclusive proof. In late August, Sudan announced it would be recalling its ambassador and his deputy. It demanded that Britain do likewise. But the Foreign Office said its small Khartoum

embassy could not function without its two top men, so it ordered all the British diplomats there to return home or re-deploy for aid work to Kenya. The ambassador, Alan Gouley, is leaving Khartoum in the next few days.

Before these diplomats can return, though, Foreign Office sources said that London would have to be convinced they would be safe. In the light of Britain's open identification with the US bombing.

Sudan has insisted that the Shifa plant had no links to Mr bin Laden, accused by the US of masterminding the two US embassy attacks, in which 263 people — including 12 Americans — were killed.

Before the crisis Britain had made progress in helping maintain a peace deal between the Islamist government in Khartoum and the main rebel group in the south, the Sudan People's Liberation Army.

Sudan's 15-year civil war costs the Khartoum government £12 million a day, while relief agencies are spending £200,000 a day to alleviate the consequences of the conflict in one of Africa's poorest countries.

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FEBRUARY 1998

Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

In news likely to dismay fans of his hard-man persona, Jack Straw has been hounded from office. He has quit as chairman of Pimlico School's governors. Poor Jack has been under pressure over his support for plans to demolish the school building, sell a chunk of the site to a developer and then rebuild — plans that would treat pupils and staff to four idyllic years on a building site. In late July, after parents passed a vote of no confidence in him by 73 votes to 5 (having voted 155-6 against the rebuilding itself) at a tempestuous meeting, Jack insisted he would not go. But then so, once, did David Mellor, and yesterday the school learnt that he's stood himself down as chairman, although he will stay on as a governor. What the official reason is, we will have to wait and see, but parents suspect his spirit was broken by the tempestuous July meeting and critical articles in the press. If so, it's a poor show. There's no room for Lily in the fight against crime, Jack. No room at all.

THE process of historical revisionism thrives at Wapping, judging by a review of Peter Preston's novel *51st State* in the Sunday Times. In this piece, Hugo Barnacle reports that when Peter was editing this paper, "the Sun staff used to bet him that they could write and edit a flawless week's run of his broadsheet any time, but that his people could never produce a single edition of the Sun. The bet was not accepted," writes Mr Barnacle, ascribing these cold feet to intellectual snobbery. For the record, the bet was accepted, gleefully, and it was Kevin McKenzie who welshed on the deal. Call us woolly minded, polemic eating, bleeding heart chatterbox by all means... but don't ever call us chicken.

WITH the House of Lords in grave peril, the Diary seeks to improve its public image by illustrating how much hereditary peers have to offer with new feature *Peer of the Week*. Inaugural subject is that noblest of young Lords, the 27-year-old ninth Earl of Hardwicke. Not the man to rest idly on ancestral laurels, the Earl seeks to make a way for himself in the harsh world of commerce. According to the *News of the World*, his Lordship offered to sell a reporter two grams of the very finest cocaine. For this, Lord H has been suspended from the Lords; but here we take a more generous view of a young man devoted to enterprise culture. By way of reward, we will be featuring fascinating facts about the Earl in the days ahead.

THERE is no room today, alas, for the promised extract from *All For Love*, Express editor Rizia Rosie Boycott's steamy classic. We will, however, return to 1930 tomorrow, when virginal debutante Violet Harcourt meets Australian media magnate James Franklin at a party, and then repairs to his car for a snog. The unscheduled delay is unfortunate, but at least gives us all the chance to fetch in the brouille.

GLANCING at the diary for fringe events at Labour's Conference, the eye is caught by the All-Party Football Group's forum on September 29. Chairman Jack Ashley will be there, along with Football League's chief executive Richard Scudamore, Gordon Taylor of the Professional Footballers' Association and "a leading figure from the Premier League". The event, Manchester United fans will be thrilled to learn, is sponsored by Sky Sports.

MEANWHILE, firm evidence emerges that New Labour is striving to deflect accusations that it is doing towards an obsession with making a quick buck. Conference passes for journalists have just arrived, with them a sweet little necklace to clip them onto. On these fetching fashion accessories — known by the Labour press office as "dog leads" — there appear, at one-inch intervals, the name of the supermarket Sainsbury's. Such class, such elegance.



The Marxists return to pronounce on the fruit of their ideas: Blairism

Jonathan Freedland



On October 15, Tony Blair will confront his parents. Not his real parents of course, but the spiritual progenitors of the New Labour project — the clutch of men and women whose intellectual spadework in the 1960s helped pave the way to Number 10. After an absence of seven years, Marxism Today is coming back.

Of course, it's a bit much to credit a humble magazine with spawning today's Labour Government — especially one that never sold more than 17,000 copies. But Marxism Today always punched far above its weight. It was the first to define "Thatcherism", even before Margaret Thatcher was in office, and predicted Labour's wilderness years long before anyone else. In 1988 it scored its biggest triumph. Under the banner "New Times", it declared that the world had changed so dramatically, all the old left assumptions were no longer valid. The bottom line: Labour would have to make its peace with capitalism and the free market. The journey from New Times to New Labour took just a few years.

Now Marxism Today is coming out of retirement, like the Frank Sinatra of old, it will make one last, special appearance. It aims to deliver its verdict on Blair and Blairism, but if past form is any guide it might well do something more — providing a road-map for the coming debate in British politics.

The effort began at the weekend, when 30 academics, journalists and assorted lefties gathered to hammer out their ideas. The scope for satire was immense: former rev-

olutionaries convening in Surrey, huddled up in a plush residential conference centre more used to training weekends for Rentokil middle managers than late nights plotting the demise of international capitalism. "Communism", "communism" and "Marxism" were uttered only rarely, and only then wrapped inside large inverted commas. The favoured language was the jargon of cultural studies, the argot in which no one ever does anything — they "create a space" to do something instead. Answers were not given so much as "framed" existing in a "matrix" before forming part of a "project".

For all that, some clear lines of argument soon emerged. The tone was set by Eric Hobsbawm, the veteran Marxist historian, who at 81 still has the stamina to sit through four consecutive two-hour sessions — with enough energy for another marathon debate after dinner. He delivered an opening lecture on the End of Neo-liberalism, identifying the current economic collapse in Asia and Russia as cracks in the facade of world capitalism.

With the special glorie of those who have waited a lifetime for vindication, Hobsbawm insisted that here, at last, was proof that the free market did not have all the answers. After two decades lying in wait in the face of *laissez-faire* economics, the road-map for the coming debate was laid out — loudly arguing that unfettered market forces spelled disaster.

In a pleasing historical irony, the left's best argument would be Russia: the one place where capitalism unbound had been tried — and

failed. So this became the central question: after years of believing that economics is beyond the reach of politics, that the market is a force of nature beyond our control, might now be the time to assert ourselves once more? Sure, the world is becoming a giant, single market — with capital flowing across the planet in seconds, and e-mail missives zipping through the ether — but maybe governments can do something to tame it, to regulate it, to channel it to make societies more just. And even, to revive a quaint idea, more equal? Approaching midnight on Saturday, Stuart Hall, the doyen of the intellectual left, put his finger on it: "Can you graft your conscience onto capitalism?"

This is not revolution. It's more akin to the awakening of a sleeping giant. And, just like the fairy tale, the giant believes it can smell blood. A whiff of encouragement came from Anatole Kaletsky, economics columnist of Rupert Murdoch's Times, who like an emissary from behind enemy lines gave four reasons why capitalism was safe — but why the right-wing ideology of market fundamentalism was doomed. Here was a man living inside the belly of the global, corporate beast declaring that capitalism actually required government intervention, and that parties of the centre-left were the only people voters trusted to do it. If the current trends in financial meltdown continued, governments — even Tony Blair's — would have to raise taxes, spend money and let inflation increase. Social democrats

should get ready: the moment for their comeback was nigh. There are problems, of course. Few of the Marxism Today crowd advocate a return to the old-style statism of socialism past. And they are short of concrete alternatives, offering few ideas for what governments can actually do — a fact which brought a scolding from Geoff Mulgan, a former MT contributor and now star-member of the Number 10 Policy Unit.

He admonished elders like Hall and Hobsbawm for a "hollowness" in their argument: they could talk a good game, but where were their practical proposals for action? In some ways, it was an unfair question. Marxism Today was never a think-tank offering work-*ish* papers on micro-policy. It's in the business of analysis and the big picture. And this weekend it groped toward a view which might shape progressive thinking for the years ahead. It declared that Tony Blair has signed up for Thatcherism just as that creed is coming unstuck. It reminded itself of the perils of effects of inequality (hearing comprehensive data on how socially inequitable societies are also physically unhealthy ones). And it committed itself to a new task: to remind Labour of its historic mission, and to renew its faith in the power to act. In the new era, such action will not be the exclusive task of government. The left will have to develop new ways for people to act collectively, beyond the state. But next month Marxism Today will send New Labour a message: the days of surrender could soon be over.

So I take leave of my work of 40 years ago. I am not entirely dissatisfied with it, but I do not exaggerate its role. Books may be of some service to human understanding and action in their time. There remains the possibility, even the probability, that they do more for the self-esteem of the author than for the fate of the world.

Extracted from the 1998 UNDP Human Development report, published today.

Forty years after the Affluent Society, the difference between rich and poor has grown far greater

The rich drive by

J K Galbraith

It is now 40 years, and something more, since I surveyed the scene in the economically advanced countries, especially the United States, and wrote *The Affluent Society*. In a much-quoted passage, that I thought at the time was perhaps too extravagant, I told of the family that took its modern, highly-styled automobile out for a holiday. They went through streets and countryside made hideous by commercial activity and commercial art. They spent their evening in a public park replete with refuse and disorder, and dined on delicately packaged food from an expensive, portable refrigerator.

So it seemed 40 years ago; in the time that has elapsed the contrast between needed public services and affluent private consumption has become much greater. Every day the

press, radio and television proclaim the abundant production of goods and the need for more money for education, public works and the desolate condition of the poor in the great cities. Clearly affluence in the advanced countries is still a highly unequal thing. All this, were I writing now, I would still emphasise. I would especially stress the continuing unhappy position of the poor. This, if anything, is more evident now.

Then in the United States it was the problem of southern plantation agriculture and the hills and hollows of the rural Appalachian Plateau. Now it is the problem of the great metropolises. There is another contrast. Were I writing now, I would give emphasis to the depressing difference in well-being between the affluent world and the less fortunate countries — mainly the post-colonial world. The rich countries have their rich and poor.

The world has its rich and poor nations.

The problem is not economics; it goes back to a far deeper part of human nature. As people become fortunate in their personal well-being, and as countries become similarly fortunate, there is a com-

mon tendency to ignore the poor, or to develop some rationalisation for the good fortune of the fortunate. Responsibility is assigned to the poor themselves. Given their personal disposition and moral tone, they are meant to be poor. Poverty is both inevitable and, in some measure, deserved. The fortunate individuals and countries enjoy their

well-being without the burden of conscience, without a troublesome sense of responsibility.

This is something I did not recognise 40 years ago; it is a habit of mind to which I would now attribute major responsibility. This is not, of course, the full story. After the Second World War decolonisation, an admirable step, nonetheless left a number of countries without effective self-government. Nothing is so important for economic development and the human condition as stable, reliable, competent and honest government. This, in important parts of the world, is still lacking. Nothing is so accepted in our times as respect for sovereignty; nothing, on occasion so protects disorder, poverty and hardship. Here I'm not suggesting an independent role for any one country and certainly not for the United States. I do believe we need a much stronger role for interna-

tional action, including the United Nations. We need to have a much larger sense of common responsibility for those suffering from the weakness, corruption, disorder and cruelty of bad government or none at all. Sovereignty, though it has something close to religious status in modern political thought, must not protect human despair. This may not be a popular point; popularity is not always a test of needed intelligence.

So I take leave of my work of 40 years ago. I am not entirely dissatisfied with it, but I do not exaggerate its role. Books may be of some service to human understanding and action in their time. There remains the possibility, even the probability, that they do more for the self-esteem of the author than for the fate of the world.

Extracted from the 1998 UNDP Human Development report, published today.

Brave new deal

Polly Toynbee



BRIXTON Hill Job Centre is a showpiece for welfare to work. This week alone, its gleaming, state-of-the-art technology has had official visits from Latvia, Israel and Norway. I first visited when it began as a "Pathfinder" pilot in January.

The manager and newly recruited New-deal advisers were brimming with enthusiasm, and so were their first clients. Young people were pouring in off the streets uninvited — let alone dragged — at twice the rate anticipated in Lambeth's carefully laid strategic plan.

This week I went back to find out how it has fared since then. Nationally and locally New-deal statistics are collected with unusually detailed scrupulousness, nothing hidden, all admirably transparent. Looking back at Lambeth's original New-deal plan, those projections can easily be compared with what has actually happened in the first months. Sadly, it is not yet looking as good as it should, with many fewer jobs found than they'd hoped.

Lambeth was set a performance target to place 800 young people in jobs in the first year, counted from last April. So far they have only found jobs for half as many people as they planned by the end of June — only 101 in the first three months. It's early days and the pace may pick up, but the rate will have to more than double if they are to hit their annual target. Lambeth's plan was already scaled down from the national one, to allow for its acute problems as one of the most deprived boroughs with high unemployment and low educational attainments. That means that while the New-deal nationally was expected to get 40 per cent into jobs by the end of June, Lambeth's target was only set at 30 per cent. In fact, in the first three months, they've only managed 20 per cent.

As a result more have gone onto other New-deal options instead: 50 per cent, have gone into work placements with charities.

MANY have disappeared from the scheme altogether to "unknown" destinations, just vanished and stopped drawing benefit. Some may have got real jobs without bothering to tell their advisers. Some may have been working and drawing benefit fraudulently. Others may earn a living in crime. Some have come back in, but are recorded as new cases. But no-one knows. The number who have disappeared equals the number who have found jobs.

Already the Tories are quick to gloat over any hint that Labour's contrived social policy isn't working. But it would be brutally wrong to say the New-deal is failing just because it isn't yet hitting its targets.

These are very early days, and if Lambeth's plan was over-optimistic that's not particularly important. New-deal architects always said there would be mistakes, some things would need changing as it goes along. It is, after all, a gigantic social experiment. The more I see of it, the more convinced I am that it will do a great deal of good. Watching what happens on the ground there can be no doubt that it is already transforming the lives of many of the young who have fallen through every other net. Statisticians are now devising a scale to measure employability, so they can record how much added value the New-deal has given those passing through it if they don't get jobs now they may still have improved their life chances.

It's easy to forget how muddled some people's lives are. The best plans can't encompass the weirdness of the human condition. Spending a day with Mandle, the same New-deal adviser I visited be-

fore, I found her as enthusiastic as ever, claiming most, but not all, of her clients do want jobs. Yet she often finds peculiar obstacles in their path.

Take Mike, the 22-year-old who arrived for all his interviews with his mother. Gradually Mandle realised that his mother never left him alone for a moment, and that's why he was unemployable. Mandle hurried him into a training job, just to get him away from his mother, but his mother insisted on coming too. The employers had to drive her home from their door, but she stayed outside all day waiting for him. "He's doing brilliantly well. Now we've got him on his own, we'll manage to get him a job too." Only such intense personal help can unravel these things. Before, difficult cases drifted on for ever.

Mandle is trying to manipulate Jamie onto an education course, but he refuses. He can't read, but said he wanted to be a vet, or at least to work with animals. She found him a perfect placement at a city farm but he didn't turn up, saying he didn't want to shovel rabbit shit. She found him a job instead with a landscape gardener, but he baulked. On Monday she sent him back to the city farm saying: "I think he'll have manual work, and then he'll see he really does need that basic education course." No one else has ever given that boy so much attention. She doesn't think him work-shy, just borderline dotty, but eventually employable.

Samuel has been looking hard for a job for two years, but hopelessly. He has some GCSE's, an ill-advised BTEC in media studies and until now he's only tried for unattractive jobs in radio. (The colleges that over-sell attractive, but useless courses just to swell their numbers should be shot.)



The best plans can't encompass the weirdness of the human condition

For the first time Mandle discussed his most realistic options, and he was now setting off optimistically for several interviews in West End record shops.

"He'll get a job because he wants one," Mandle said with certainty. He too seemed pleased, under no pressure to add: "The New-deal's good. They got my cousin a good job in two days."

Mandle has never used the ultimate sanction, stopping someone's benefit: those who won't work just disappear. She treats people with friendly respect, anxious not to lose the reasonably good word on the street about the New-deal. Its reputation is quite an achievement in such an alienated community where the employment service is seen as the benefits police.

What can they do now to improve their figures? It's hard to know. There's plenty of training money in the kitty — enough for the manager to be trying to bend the rules and offer an expensive NVQ course for learning to drive. That ought to bring in a flood of volunteers.

"We were too optimistic about how long it would take to make some of them employable," says the man who drew up Lambeth's plan. "But I'm confident that, when more have done the full programme, we'll suddenly see the cumulative effect in jobs."

The Guardian

Wednesday September 9 1998
Edition Number 47277
119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER
Tel No: 0171-278 2332
Fax No: 0171-837 4530
E-mail: letters@guardian.co.uk
Website: http://www.guardian.co.uk

Recession beckons

Reduce interest rates now

IT IS time to start bringing interest rates down again. They have been increased six times since Labour won the election, at an unacceptable cost to Britain's industrial base. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meets today and tomorrow. Having driven rates up to the top of the hill it should now sound the retreat amid growing signs that national output is slowing down and the threat of higher inflation receding. Although the pound has fallen back from the dizzy heights it reached earlier in the year it is still seriously overvalued, as witness the almost daily litany of complaints from industry. Yesterday Nissan, one of the biggest overseas investors in the UK, warned of a severe profits slump as a result of the 20 per cent rise in the value of sterling. This followed less than a week after Fujitsu announced the closure of its semi-conductor plant in Tony Blair's Sedgefield constituency which, although not directly caused by the strong pound, was not helped by it either. Also yesterday, Marks & Spencer, which prides itself on buying from British companies, urged its 15 leading suppliers to increase their use of low cost manufacturing facilities in countries like Morocco and Sri Lanka.

Figures released yesterday indicate that manufacturing output actually contracted slightly over the year (following a drop in new investment of almost 2 per cent) and retail sales are continuing to slow down.

Changes in interest rates are claimed to take up to two years to work their way through the economy. The MPC should therefore pause to think. It should ask itself what the economy will look like in 18 months time if the overvalued pound, aggravated by the economic flak from Asia and Russia, forces a fresh round of job shedding just when the Government's flagship Welfare-to-Work is supposed to be delivering results. Strictly speaking the MPC's job (unlike that of the US central bank) is to bring underlying inflation down to 2.5 per cent without bothering itself with what is happening to unemployment or growth. That is a laudable remit. But even within the MPC's narrow terms of reference there are strong signs that inflationary forces are receding even before the previous six interest rate increases have done their worst. Increases in average earnings — which have been artificially inflated by exceptionally high seasonal bonuses (reflecting last year's economic buoyancy, not this year's) and other special factors — are now subsiding. And there is little to worry about in the annual increase in retail prices. The Government's preferred measure (the official RPI minus mortgage interest payments) was down to 2.6 per cent in July — only a whisker above the official target of 2.5 per cent. Most of the upward pressures on the index have come from higher taxes in the budget rather than wages. And the rise in the Maastricht-compatible harmonised index of consumer prices (used for comparisons with Europe) fell from 2.0 to only 1.5 per cent between May and July. The MPC should be worrying about the disturbing possibility of deflation or falling prices (it is already happening in China and Japan) rather than inflation.

Strictly speaking the MPC can't be blamed for following a remit it shouldn't

have been given in the first place. Nor has it been helped by Gordon Brown's failure to increase taxes in the right place (consumer spending) in his budget. This left the MPC to achieve with monetary policy what he failed to do with fiscal policy. Which is all the more reason for MPC members to err on the side of employment. If they have even the slightest doubts about the recessionary dangers attached to the monetary squeeze they should start to bring rates down now.

Blair's star wanes

But Hague's hasn't even risen

ALL honeymoons come to an end. Tony Blair's has been longer than any previous British prime minister enjoyed. Already immensely popular on election day, he went on to win an unprecedented surge of post-election popularity. Blair's public satisfaction ratings far exceeded Margaret Thatcher's at the peak of her popularity following her landslide 1983 election. But 16 months on his popularity has finally begun to pall. Our annual State of the Nation poll published today shows a sharp decline in the Prime Minister's image with 8 per cent finding him more arrogant, 17 per cent fewer believing he "understands people like me", and 20 per cent fewer believing him to be more honest than most politicians.

The last item will cause most pain in Downing Street. The Prime Minister takes honesty ratings extremely seriously. Nothing riles him more than allegations impugning his truthfulness. Last year 54 per cent rated him more honest than most but this has now shrunk to 34 per cent — only 4 per cent higher than Major was achieving. That's politics. If Blair reached new heights, William Hague descended to new lows. The

main compensation for Labour is that the Opposition leader has barely improved on last year's disastrous ratings. The only criterion where Hague achieves a high score is on arrogance (44 per cent) but on all others, he trails far behind Blair with an honesty rating of 14 per cent, an empathy rating of 12 per cent, and a mere 8 per cent believing him to have "lots of personality". Margaret Thatcher's recently expressed belief that the Tories would lose the next election is shared by voters: 71 per cent believe it will take at least two elections for the Conservatives to return to power, with 26 per cent believing it will take three.

Paradoxically, the decline in Blair's popularity coincides with a rise in public confidence in Labour's administration of health and education. Ironically, the promise in July of big public spending injections in hospitals and schools appears to have increased public satisfaction long before the money begins to be spent. It does not start until next April. Yet there is no room for ministerial complacency on these two key priority areas. Far fewer people this year believe the NHS is getting worse but only 15 per cent believe it is getting better. The Government is on surer ground on education, where twice as many people believe the service is improving. Extra money on its own will not be enough: the voters clearly want tangible results.

Hackney downs

A rotten borough pays out

HACKNEY council is set to pay a black former chief officer, Sam Yeboah, three quarters of a million pounds after a tribunal finding of discrimination. However, great injustice in the case it's large. Contrast

it with awards by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board — are jobs really more valuable than loss of life and limb? With other pay-offs — we reported this week the sum offered a Cornish health executive — this award suggests a lack of proportion in the treatment of officials who for one reason or another lose their jobs. In cash-strapped public services, every penny must be seen to count if arguments for redistributive taxation are to be sustained.

Mr Yeboah's case is not even a one-off. In the pipeline are more allegations of discrimination and mismanagement by Hackney council. In the recent past are resignations and dismissals, all involving lawyers' fees and expensive settlements by an authority supposed to be serving one of England's most socially disadvantaged areas. This is truly a rotten borough. The mechanisms of pluralist politics have broken down; successive elections have failed to replace non-performing or incompetent councillors (most of them labelled Labour, though they bear little obvious relationship to the besotted modernisers who control the party's upper reaches). Advocates of local democracy, unwilling to admit there may on occasion be insuperable conflicts between the principles of representativeness and effectiveness, bear Hackney like a cross. Tony Blair and the other party leaders tried until recently to keep their distance. Declaring the borough an education action zone was long overdue; radical solutions, including contracting-out schools, have to be considered. Hackney's management failures, shown in adjudications like this one, are visible in other deprived urban areas. Social exclusion is made worse by administrative breakdown. Improving public management in places such as Hackney remains one of the biggest domestic challenges facing the Blair government.

Letters to the Editor

A loan can really tie you down

SEE the Halifax's new TV ad campaign contains the backing track of the 1974 Burning Spear song, *Slavery Days*. I don't know what subliminal message the Halifax is trying to get across. But Winston Rodney's lyrics in the original song include the lines, "with shackles around our legs and they used us, till they refused us." I would suggest that anyone seeking a Halifax mortgage read the fine print. Carter H Clarke, London.

AS air travellers multiply and get older and therefore more vulnerable, the time must come to end the "Is there a doctor on board?" ritual (Doctor to the rescue, September 5). The answer will lie in the field of airborne tele-medicine. Combine what is already happening in rural Wales with techniques which allow us to see images of our Mir space station. A simple monitor on board could transmit video pictures together with vital signs to the nearest hospital. That'll cut out the psychiatrist diagnosing thrombosis (and sending bills in afterwards). Howard Goodman, Reigate, Surrey.

ANDY Gott (Letters, September 1) quite rightly wants to know what is a "portion" of certain fruits and vegetables. According to the Oxford Reference Dictionary of Food and Nutrition, they are peas (75 grams), apple (110 grams), cabbage (100 grams) and beans (225 grams). Prof Arnold B Bender, Leatherhead, Surrey.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address. We may edit letters; shorter ones are more likely to appear.

Sky's the limit for profits

WE ARE beginning to see the real meaning of television's "digital revolution" (Sky's soccer bid, September 9). The 200 proposed satellite channels were always going to struggle to attract audiences. Once again, as with the arrival of satellite subscription channels, it is Murdoch who understands that live, exclusive sport is the guaranteed route to pay-per-view success. No other content — not even movies — can be charged on a per-programme basis with the same guarantee of massive profits. No doubt Manchester United fans will be promised the earth: unlimited cash to buy the world's star players, frozen ticket prices, a permanent place at soccer's top table (anyone unfamiliar with these arguments can take a look at yesterday's *Sun* and *Times*, where they will see the pernicious effect on objective reporting which such ownership conflicts create). If they are tempted to be reassured, they should remember the promises that Murdoch has made, over the years, to get sports, regulators and tribunals around the world which have tried to attach conditions to his acquisitions. Digital television means that big football clubs have be-

come potential gold mines in media corporations' desperate search for valuable and exportable "products". Old Trafford spectators will be relegated to walk-on (or sit-down) parts in the great electronic jamboree of big game soccer, and no doubt Highbury and Anfield will follow to other media predators. The interests of soccer are irrelevant. Welcome to the real television revolution. Steven Barnett, School of Communication, Design and Media, University of Westminster.

WE MAY not all agree with Bill Shankly's dictum that "it is not about life and death — it's more important than that" but, for many Britons, football makes an invaluable contribution to their sense of well-being and self-esteem. Couldn't we ensure the future of our best-loved sports teams and harness the civic pride they engender by returning control of the clubs to local communities via their elected councilors? Team managers and players would get on with winning games, but a chief executive would oversee daily administration of the club, as practised in hospitals. Promotion of communities

and clubs would go hand in hand, while schools and local groups could make more use of club facilities, which largely lie dormant. Fans feel increasingly exploited at the turnstiles and in club shops. Financial gains from television should be returned to the communities that generated them, rather than toward a few individuals whose beggar-my-neighbour attitude threatens the future of professional football. Hamilton Laird, London.

THANK you for your front page headline on the £250 million (September 8) which reported Mr Mandelson as saying "I love football and am a great supporter of those who broadcast it..." It helped me to appreciate better what Labour means by the Third Way. David Halpin, London.

THE £250 million offered by BSkyB would be better spent on new imports or on creating original programming for Sky 1. I like *Married With Children* and *Star Trek* in all its forms, but how many more repeats are we expected to watch? Ken Andrews, Birmingham.

On the inappropriate use of a cigar

HAVE just seen the highly important letter from Mr Bernard Gilson (Letters, August 29) in which he says it is "de rigueur" to remove the band of a cigar. Noticing that I removed the band of my cigar in a photograph printed in your newspaper he concludes I was a social outcast!

This is rather odd as he also notices Churchill and Castro removed the bands of their

cigars, whereas Naomi Campbell, Sharon Stone and Madonna did not remove the bands of theirs. I know which group I would rather be with!

For the education of Mr Gilson and your readers who, I am sure, are desperate for news on this matter, there is no definitive behavioural correctness on whether to remove the band of a cigar or not. But I always found most serious

cigar smokers did remove the band. The majority of cigars sold in "cabinet selection" boxes of 50 have no bands on them anyway!

I even checked with one of the great cigar experts, Mr Edward Sahakian, proprietor of Davidoff of London. He starts his cigar with the band on and takes it off half way through. Michael Winner, London.



In disgrace at the Town Hall

THERE was one vital element missing from your story about former Hackney personnel chief, Sam Yeboah's long-awaited industrial tribunal victory (Council fees £750,000 race pay-out, September 9) — the disgraceful role played by some of Hackney's councillors.

The tribunal concluded that councillors on Bernard Crofton's disciplinary panel had been right to dismiss him. Bernard Crofton was reinstated by a coalition of Tories, Liberal Democrats and councillors who Labour expelled in Hackney for their improper behaviour in this affair. That decision has cost Mr

Yeboah his career and the council tax payer £750,000. Evidence at the tribunal suggests there was improper intervention by some members in the disciplinary proceedings which eventually led to the council making the decisions it did. The Labour Group is asking the District Auditor to investigate with a view to making councillors who behaved improperly bear the costs consequent upon their actions. The tribunal's findings vindicate Labour's decision to take the disciplinary action which led to the expulsion of a number of Hackney councillors. Cllr Julie Gribble, Hackney Labour Group.

Science goes down the plughole

THE priorities of this country around me. Due to lack of funds, a competent marine biology research laboratory was closed by the Government (Trust splashes out to remove blot on the landscape, September 7). However, it seems there are ample funds available to demolish it and replace it with a replica of a Victorian coastguard look-out. Could someone please ex-

plain to me, a scientist whose post is under threat, why this is so laudable? Instead of looking to the future and investing in science, the plan seems to be to turn back the clock to try to reproduce a "golden era" which never really existed. This pervasive retro-spection can only hasten the decline of British science. Dr Jane F Sutherland, Reading, Berks.

A highly unhealthy state of affairs at the hospital

ON behalf of staff at UCL Hospitals, I warmly thank Victor Keegan (Analysis, September 3) for reporting that UCLH Trust is due to pay £200 million for a £150 million hospital under a Private Finance Initiative deal. Since his article provoked a response from our chief executive, Dr Reading (Letters, September 5), this allowed staff to plan more information about plans for our hospitals otherwise denied as "commercially sensitive".

Although Dr Reading accuses Keegan of using the mathematics of the kindergarten, his own figures show that the Trust will pay £200 million for a £150 million hospital. Nor does he mention that the deal will include giving away NHS hospitals and nurses' homes worth millions more for development as luxury flats and offices. Either way a child can easily work out that private companies stand to make millions from taxpayers' money. It is not surprising that Unison members in the Trust recently voted by 76 per cent in a ballot to take strike action against the deal. Candy Udwin, Unison branch secretary, UCL Hospitals, London.

UNDER PFI, the company that builds and owns an NHS hospital will also employ its porters and cleaners. The priority will be the highest possible profit for shareholders. This puts the company in conflict with NHS medical professionals, whose priority is to provide the best service for patients. If, for example, surgeons wish to operate during the night the company could veto this on the grounds that overtime payment to theatre cleaners and porters would reduce profits. Keegan's prophecy of "a savage built-in squeeze on services" is a warning to patients and medical staff that we ignore at our peril. Dr M J Heatley, Oxford.

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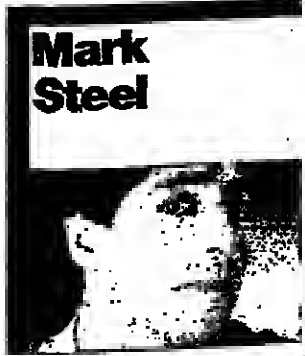
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AS THE man from PC World set up the hideous new computer, I thought: "We are not living in new times, dominated by new technology requiring New Labour." For some time, people had laughed at the old Amstrad, because if you asked it to do something it waited a few seconds, flashed a green light and made a "berr" noise which was the computer having a lag. But

peer pressure eventually won out and I became convinced by people who insisted it's essential to have a machine with loads of purple fish going backwards and forwards across it.

As an article in this paper on Monday said: "A business card is regarded as a sign of respectability or, worse, Luddism." Without the latest hardware, you're not just out of date technologically but politically. These things are changing the fundamentals of how we live and work, as we become empowered as individuals etc etc. But what use is the latest technology to most of us? "On an Apple Mac you can do a pie chart," someone told me excitedly. Well, that's what every household needs above all else. Then you can run through the house yelling "Guess what, 11 per cent of the area of this property is the kitchen." The bloke setting it up was

running through some other functions. At the press of a button, he told me, you can reduce the text to half the size. Which is indeed clever but how often do we need to do this? Cement mixers are clever but few of us bother to set one up in the bedroom. "Well," the salesman could say, "You'd have everything you needed if you woke up one night and just, well, fancied a new path."

He then showed me how, using a mouse and cyberbrush it was possible to paint a squiggle and print it, taking only 20 or 30 times as long as it would using a notepad and a crayon. I wish I'd kept my Rich-a-sketch. I could have called it Squiggles '98 and sold it at a computer fair for 500 quid. And do domestic owners need 140 different typefaces? Are there people who stroll around Tesco's, sniggering "Ruh huh, they've done their shopping list in New Roman. How unimaginative." Worst

of all, because this thing is capable of thousands of tricks, it's itching to do some of them so it can show off. Press one wrong key and the whole text is likely to shuffle into a corner while the screen flashes up five alternative routes to Malden.

So it falls dismally as a time-saver. The Amstrad would take 500 berr per berr to lose as much time as one session screaming "What bavs you done with my article you pory Micro-cyberstic Windows bastard!" It can tell the time, show cartoons, play CDs and do sums, but no better than a clock, a video, a CD player and a calculator. So these talents are fascinating but pointless, like a lawnmower with a tumble dryer attached. The Internet, far from transforming the world, is a source for bored office workers to find out the odds on who'll be the next Tottenham manager, or read about

David Duchovny's favourite cheese. It's a hobby, a sad like any other. Except that no-one claimed we'd soon all work from home because we'd all have access to a karaoke machine.

NEW technology has changed domestic life far less than the products of the post-war boom. Television, mass-produced cars and washing machines had a impact, which makes it difficult to remember how we managed before them. Whereas in 20 years' time, no one will say: "Do you remember the old days before Windows '95 when we had to write out party invitations in felt pen?" It's not that the Internet, e-mail and computers capable of pie-charts are of no value at all, but the claims made for their influence are wildly exaggerated, and are part of a theory that the old politics of collective action are irrele-

vant, now that we're all at our work-stations. But, for most workers whose job has been altered by the latest innovations, the changes have made their lives worse. They can be contacted at all hours, and are expected to have already started work on their lap-top before they arrive.

So anyone with an old-fashioned business card should be proud to be accused of Luddism. For the Luddites weren't opposed to new machinery, but to machinery being employed to create massive profits at the expense of destitute craftsmen. Far from being hostile to technology, I imagine that, while dodging the troops to burn down a shearing machine, they'd have found that a few mobile phones would have come in pretty handy. At this point the bloke from PC World said: "Look mate, just tell me where you want the printer. Only if I'm not back at the depot by five the boss'll kill me."

Pierce Gerety

Champion of the poor

PIERCE GERETY, who died in last week's Swissair crash at the age of 56, was a champion of the world's refugees. In his work on their behalf he never forgot his Harvard legal training: if the law is on your side, argue the facts; if the facts are on your side, argue the law. He was a Jesuit at heart, and he was a Jesuit in the way he lived. He was a Jesuit in the way he lived. He was a Jesuit in the way he lived.



Gerety... hanging the table

settled — she based in Brooklyn and he in Geneva — after years in the world's trouble spots, often apart. They met in Paris in 1962, when Gerety, a 21-year-old Yale University graduate, was studying theology and philosophy at the Institut Catholique — and working in a soup kitchen. After tearful farewells, he returned to the United States to take up a seminary place; Marie went to Mexico as a hospital volunteer.

But Gerety had made his choice. He got on a Greyhound bus to Mexico, eventually married Marie, and together they went to India for the Catholic Relief Ser-

vices. Later, he attended Harvard Law School and became a legal-aid lawyer in New York City. At the age of 36 he switched careers again, going with Marie to Thailand for the International Rescue Committee to help Cambodian refugees. He joined UNHCR in 1982 and, after a stint in Geneva, had spells helping Eritrean refugees in Sudan, Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Vietnamese refugees in the Philippines. From 1994, Pierce and Marie worked in the African Great Lakes region and Somalia, negotiating with warlords and rebel leaders for access for aid to tens of thousands of refugees.

According to Jane Stanley, the BBC Africa correspondent, Gerety saw the stages of helping the media. In Somalia in 1996, she remembers, there was tremendous donor fatigue, but Gerety made sure that the country was kept on the map. A brave politician when he negotiated with warlords, he was a realist about what could be achieved.

In 1996 Sally Burnheim, an information officer with UNICEF, the UN children's fund, saw Gerety's tenacity at work. During that year's Operation Lifeline Sudan there was flooding in the eastern part of southern Sudan, and the government was refusing access, even though there were about 20,000 refugees there. It took Gerety four months but he worked around the system and used all possible means until the media and aid could get through.

Iain Levine, now Amnesty International's UN representative in New York, was also in Sudan in 1996 and dined with Gerety in Brooklyn the night before he died. "He was difficult to work with at times but it was understood by everyone that this was because he set high standards. In negotiations he was never aggressive, but took the approach that certain things — like human dignity — are non-negotiable," said Levine.

Gerety leaves Marie, two sons and a daughter. He is also survived by his mother, Helen.

Alex Duval Smith

Pierce Gerety, UNHCR official, born September 7, 1941; died September 2, 1998

Dr Ian James

The doctor of music

MUSICIANS owe a debt of gratitude to Dr Ian James, who has died aged 61. A talented and enthusiastic viola player, he realised the devastating effect of stage fright on the lives of musicians, whether soloists or orchestral players. He approached this problem first with the use of beta-blockers, then realising that a pill was not the only way to solve this condition, used his skills as a physician to look at the wider problems facing his musician patients.

Ian James was brought up in Gower, South Wales, the son of a schoolmaster who became head of Gower grammar school. It was a lively upbringing and he mixed with his father's pupils, many of whom were themselves to lead lives of distinction. Indeed, his father taught English to Dylan Thomas. As a boy James developed a love of music, and gained a place in the viola section of the

National Youth Orchestra of Wales. However, he decided to study medicine, graduating in 1960 from University College Medical School, London. James undertook his early training at hospitals in London, Cambridge, Cardiff and Liverpool. In 1964 he moved to Cambridge to develop his interests in cardiovascular and metabolic research under the tutelage of Professor Ivor Mills. His work on the neurogenic control of cerebral blood flow gained him a PhD, and his paper on this topic has since become a citation classic.

In 1968 he moved to the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine, London, as lecturer in medicine and therapeutics. He was subsequently promoted to senior lecturer and then reader. During the next 30 years, he published more than 250 papers on various aspects of drugs and therapeutics.

It was in the 1970s, as an amateur viola player, that James's personal experience

Ian James saw a way to help individuals whose nervousness, linked to performance, was crippling their lives. He saved many careers



James... trembling bow

of performance nerves led him to pioneer the use of the beta-blockers for stage fright. At an orchestral rehearsal, he found the viola section being requested to play their part to the conductor, player by player. His own trembling bow arm, and consequent failure to play, led him to solve this problem for himself — and for professional musicians whose cause he was at

ways to champion. With beta-blockers, he saw a way to help individuals whose performance-linked nervousness was crippling their lives. However, it soon became apparent that tackling stage-fright needed more than the quick-fix solution of prescribing pills. So the discipline of Performing Arts Medicine was born.

James initially founded the Elmdon Trust, a charity aimed at studying anxiety in performance. Later, with others, he founded the British Association of Performing Arts Medicine, together with its associated British Performing Arts Medicine Trust — a charity embracing the entire performing arts. He was chairman of both organisations as well as the Association of Medical Advisers to British Orchestras, which enabled every orchestra in the country to have its own doctor, trained in the associated problems of musicians. He was a founder member of the International Society of the Study of Tension in Performance.

There is no doubt that James's work saved many careers. He recognised that many cases of repetitive strain injury could be the result of poor playing technique, and he was able to see that a performing artist presenting with a physical problem might have other underlying factors, which triggered

pain or disability. The often stressful and difficult lifestyle of people in these professions caused a great deal of emotional and physical pain. James understood this and treated his patients in a multi-disciplinary way.

He also developed an interest in ME, and his ability to give confidence to his patients, coupled with his scientifically agile mind, enabled him to treat them with an astonishing degree of success.

Ian James is survived by two daughters from his first marriage and by his second wife, the concert violinist Jane Faulkner, and their children, Jeremy and Henrietta. Ian was short in stature — but as Dylan Thomas might have said "average height for a Welshman". But he was so very tall from the shoulders up.

Garfield Davies

Ian Mouring James, doctor, born February 15, 1937; died August 19, 1998

A Country Diary

BLAKENEY, NORTH NORFOLK: Village amateur dramatics owes a lot of its appeal to the fact that the audiences know the actors in their off-stage lives. The Blakeney Players are famous for their summer-season shows, and this year's was a Famous Five pastiche of high jinks and derring-do on the Point, the sand and shingle spit that shelters Blakeney harbour from the North Sea. The production succeeded in tapping the audience's communal memory of childhood days spent haunting the dunes and pools, and at times the scent of sea-pink and tree lupins was quite palpable. The show was received with riotous approval.

Yet what impressed me as much as the gossip of the plot was the role the production played in the social life of this village. It goes without saying that most of the cast had multiple roles, that one of the characters spent the day of the final performance preparing a pre-show supper for 150. This was also a show put on with "off-comers" and summer tourists in mind. Blakeney's community hall even has part of its dedication to its many "visitors" — so much more generous than the introverted and defensive role currently being suggested for the countryside in some quarters.

I looked around my fellow players on that last night, and its diverse mixture of old and new residents, musicians, growers, sculptors, ferry-operators, painters, wardens, fishermen — all like the play itself living off the local landscape — and felt I had glimpsed the exciting future of the countryside that lies beyond farming.

RICHARD MABEY



Best foot forward... Wilfrid Capper out walking on the Ulster Way, which he helped to found

PAGEAMAKER

Wilfrid Capper

Peaceful pursuits in rural Ulster

WILFRID CAPPER, who has died aged 93, devoted his life to safeguarding and gaining access to large tracts of the Northern Ireland countryside. He sought to achieve his aims through quiet talk and persuasion. He wanted the perfect world and, if it was always just out of his reach, he strove to make life better for all who love the land.

Educated at Bangor grammar school, Capper progressed to the Methodist College and Queen's University, Belfast. In 1923 he became a civil servant with the Department of Education, and then with the Department of Agriculture. The forestry division then claimed him, but he was never a high-powered executive, senior clerk was the limit of his professional progress. His influence was in the voluntary organisations of the countryside itself.

Capper instigated a number of rural organisations, pioneering new methods of

securing walkers' rights in a changing world. In 1946 he visited the Pennine Way in northern England and determined to secure a similar route in Northern Ireland, although it did not become a reality until 1974. Today the Ulster Way is a marked walkers' route, crossing all six counties, and its 600 miles link nine areas of outstanding natural beauty. A 50-mile stretch of the way is now called the Capper Trail.

All this entailed much patient negotiation, a build-up of contacts and mutual confidence. Through his pleasant personality, Capper succeeded in disarming landowners' and farmers' organisations that were inclined to hold what they had and fear access from individuals who might transform rights into trespass. Capper and his fellow walkers understood the reaction — they wanted no law-breakers under their banner.

Unlike England, the Northern Ireland countryside had

few rights of way established by farm workers and villagers in the distant past. When Capper was faced with direct refusal, he usually found a way round. A quiet country council road served the same purpose in linking existing tracks. If a field could not be crossed, it might be circumvented. Direct confrontation was anathema to Capper; his

He strove to make life better for all who love the land

meetings were usually amicable and, a skilful negotiator, he would gain his points without bluster.

The "outdoor movement" that followed the first world war was his métier. He was among the leaders who encouraged young people into groups to follow an adventurous and healthy way of life. Later he became a notable

member of the Irish Temperance Society and the Vegetarian Society. Through the activities of the Co-operative Holidays Association Walking Club Capper discovered the burgeoning youth hostel movement, and in 1931 — in the depths of the Depression — he and six friends established the Northern Ireland version. This energetic party scoured the countryside for suitable sites and buildings to adapt as hostels.

In the 1980s Capper became concerned about the threat to the Causeway Coast posed by the uncontrolled growth of caravan sites and weekend chalets in beautiful areas. By a mighty effort involving the Youth Hostel Association of Northern Ireland, the bay was bought and its unsightly future secured through a public appeal. Whitepark Bay was bought and presented to the National Trust.

The Ulster Society for the Preservation of the Countryside was founded in 1936. Again Capper was the instiga-

tor, building on previous successes. During his 40 years as honorary secretary, he wrote its history in a book entitled *Caring for the Countryside*.

Capper combined his walking with sketching the rural scene, for he was a distinguished amateur artist. Yet for all the joy he found in rambling, he always made time to help others do the same and founded the Ulster Federation of Rambling Clubs in 1978. It now has 26 constituent clubs. In 1975 he was appointed MBE and recently gained the Sir John Hunt Award for his services to the countryside.

Capper sought to provide his beloved Ulster with national parks and a countryside commission, but these eluded him during his long lifetime. His wife Evelyn predeceased him.

Edward W Hart

Wilfrid Mervyn Capper, countryside campaigner, born 12 July 12, 1905; died July 27, 1998

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Birthdays

Pauline Baynes, designer and book illustrator, 76; Frank Clark, football manager, 55; Prof John Davis, warden, All Souls College, Oxford, 67; Alice Thomas Ellis, writer, 96; Neil Fairbrother, cricketer, 35; Eric Forth, Conservative MP, 54; Hugh Grant, actor, 38; Robin Hyman, publisher, 67; Elin Jones, jazz drummer, 71; The Rev Prof Norman Porteous, theologian and linguist, 100; CHIT Robertson, actor, 73; James Sabben-Clare, educationalist, 57; Richard Sharpe, rugby footballer, 60; Dave Stewart, rock singer and producer, 48; Dr Shirley Summerskill, former Labour MP, 67; Chaim Topol, Israeli actor and singer, 63; Margaret Tyacke, actress, 67; Edward Upward, writer and critic, 84; Ed Victor, literary agent, 68; Prof David Williams, astronomer, 61.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

IN A REPORT headed, United News in \$10m sex harassment action, page 19, September 3, we said that the company involved, Carben, had made no comment. This was incorrect. Carben issued a statement saying that it emphatically denounced the behaviour implied in the allegations and that it would not tolerate, under any circumstances, misconduct of that nature. A spokesperson said: "We have a series of policies and measures in place to prevent such behaviour, as well as formal channels of complaint for those who feel that they have been wronged, in any manner, in the workplace."

IN THE obituary of Carl Barrieau, page 25, September 1, we should have made it clear that Barrieau did reform Ken Johnson's West Indian Dance Orchestra, which was aug-

mented, as in Johnson's day, by one or two white musicians. They broadcast, played dances and several concerts, including the Jazz Jamboree, before folding. Barrieau then organised the entirely new line-up shown in the photograph that accompanied the obituary. On moving to Australia he continued to work the leading night-club circuits, even in his recent semi-retirement.

A DIARY item, page 16, yesterday, left readers puzzled about the precise whereabouts of Peter Mandelson at 7.30pm on Sunday, placing him in a non-existent Westbourne Park Grove, in west London. Westbourne Park Road, that should have been.

SMALLWOOD, page 2, Saturday Review, September 5, suggested the use of recordings to

enable English commentators to pronounce the names of Sri Lankan cricketers. "Pressing number 11 would allow them to insert the name Muralitharan, correctly pronounced." But, incorrectly spelt, it's Muralitharan.

CORRECTION of a correction: In this column, page 19, September 5, we said the Gloster Meteor did not fly as a combat aircraft in the second world war. Several readers pointed out that the Meteor was the first jet aircraft to enter operational service with any air force. It was used to equip 616 Squadron from July 12, 1944, flew its first combat sortie on July 27, 1944, and had its first combat success on August 4 that year. The Junkers 88 was originally a bomber, but later versions, from the Ju 88C onwards, were night fighters.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Please quote date and page number. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor by telephoning 0171 239 9389 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Surface mail to Readers' Editor, The Guardian, 115, Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0171 239 9387. E-mail: readers@guardian.co.uk

Death Notices

SADDINGTON, George, on Friday 28 September, formerly of The London Lodge of Printing, Funeral at Croydon Crematorium, on Monday 14th September at 2.30pm. Loved by all, donations preferred.

In Memoriam

OBITUARY, Jan, 28-09-93, Will always be missed.
To place your announcement telephone 0171 239 9387 or fax 0171 713 4167 between 9am and 5pm Mon-Fri.

Analysis Paying teachers



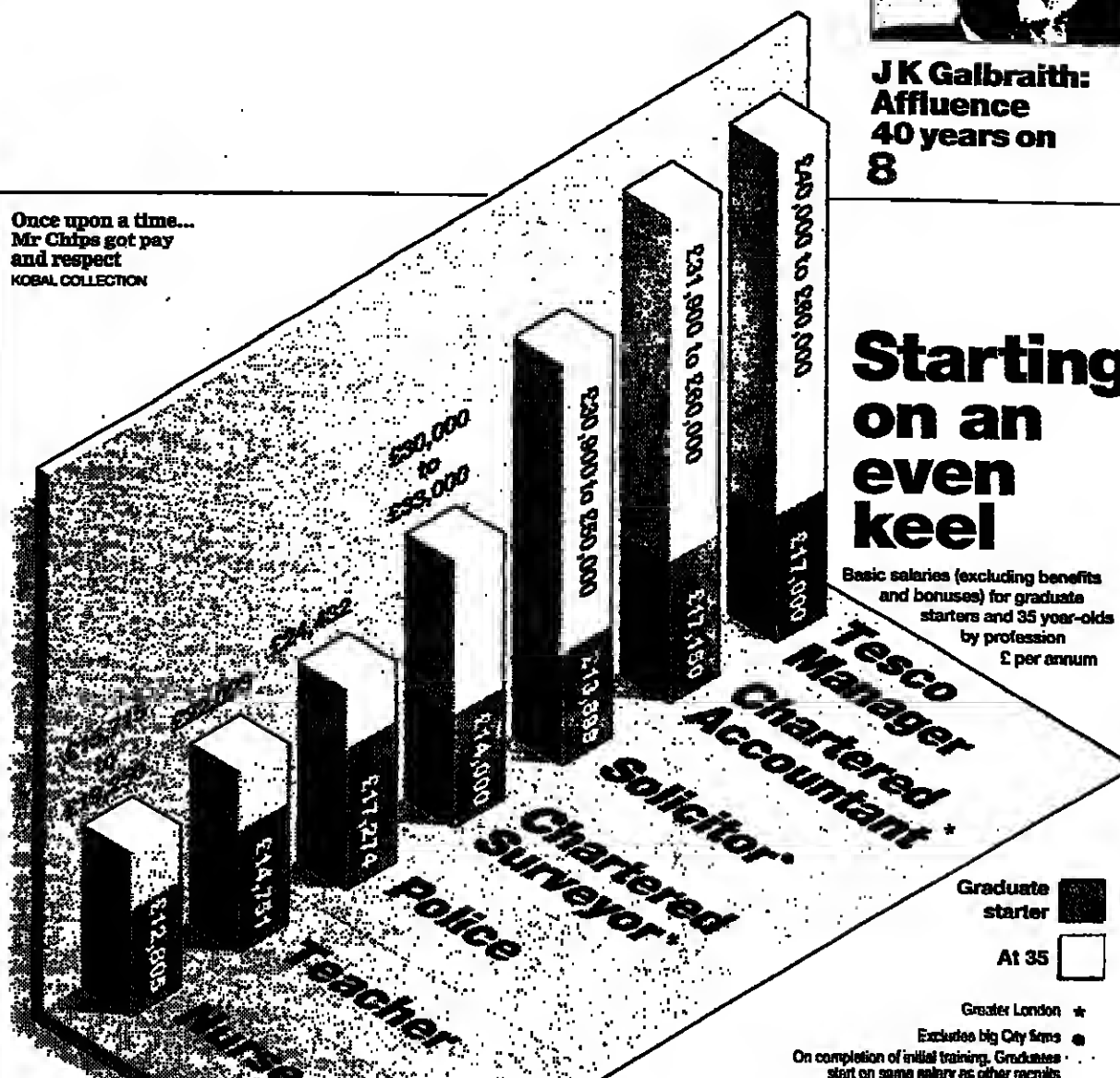
Once upon a time...
Mr Chips got pay
and respect
KOBAL COLLECTION



J K Galbraith:
Affluence
40 years on
8

Starting on an even keel

Basic salaries (excluding benefits
and bonuses) for graduate
starters and 35 year-olds
by profession
£ per annum



Better schools depend on better (and more) teachers. But where are they going to come from? David Blunkett would like to pay a bit more but **John Carvel** wonders whether his plans to improve the pay of some classroom teachers are going to resolve the recruitment crisis.

New term, no staff

THE Government is beginning to understand that teachers get a rotten deal financially and statistically in the schools will not improve until they get a better one. So what needs to happen to teaching if the profession is to become an attractive option for brighter graduates? And since there has got to be something for something, what should teachers offer in return for more money?

The mood music of Labour's first year in office has been discordant. There has been a conflict between the main themes of its top priority policy: Tony Blair and his ministers taught us that "education, education, education" was good, good, good but they also seemed to think too many of the teachers who delivered it were slack, under-trained and wedded to an egalitarian culture that tolerated low levels of achievement.

Instead of liberating the profession or buttering it up after its battering at the hands of the Tories, government ministers waged war. The belligerent tone was struck within three weeks of polling

day when Stephen Byers, cutting his teeth as school standards minister on his way to a seat in Cabinet, named and shamed 18 failing schools. The Prime Minister (rather more than the Education Secretary David Blunkett) adopted the combative style of Chris Woodhead, chief inspector of schools and hammer of teaching incompetence. Emphasis was put on toughness. Labour policies — including unprecedentedly prescriptive direction from Whitehall on the teaching methods to be adopted to improve literacy and numeracy in primary schools — did little to bolster teachers' self-respect.

There were some compensating initiatives. Mr Blair appeared in cinema and television advertisements to boost the slogan "everyone remembers a good teacher". David Blunkett appointed Tim Brighouse, chief education officer of Birmingham and supreme exponent of enthusing teachers by praising their successes, as joint vice-chairman of his school standards task force. The other vice-chairman was Chris Woodhead but even he

came to achieve a better balance between praising and blaming teachers. Lord Putnam got busy preparing a glitzy competition to identify the nation's best teachers and present them with "oscars" on prime-time television. Legislation was passed to establish a General Teaching Council, giving the profession some of the status and autonomy provided for doctors by the General Medical Council. Yet overall the tone was combative and the relationship between ministers and the rival teaching unions — as ever locked in battle for members — was distant.

Changes are now starting. During negotiations over the comprehensive spending review announced in July, Mr Blunkett persuaded the Treasury that teaching faced a genuine crisis of recruitment which was endangering the Government's strategy for improving standards. Labour's electoral fortunes would not improve if polling day coincided with stories about children being sent home from school for lack of qualified staff to teach them.

Mr Blunkett's fears were confirmed by the Graduate Teacher Training Registry. Its figures for 1998 showed a 12 per cent drop in numbers accepted for the one-year postgraduate course in secondary teaching, the main entry route into schoolteaching for specialists. Only 690 graduates have accepted places to train as maths teachers — down from 980 at the same time last year and 60 per cent below the official target for this year. Another 1,628 accepted places for the sciences — 40 per cent below the official target. They included 180 for physics (down 39 per cent on last year), 304 for chemistry (down 21 per cent) and 718 for biology (down 16 per cent) (1). The numbers for maths are especially alarming.

David Elart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, called them "worst since the mid-1990s and the rock-bottom numbers for physics could well make it an extreme minority subject in the not too distant future." Other teaching specialisms with serious shortages include design and technology, information technology, modern languages and geography.

This is not the first recruitment crisis. Previously governments have muddled through on the assumption that they would be solved by the next economic recession when graduates emerging from the universities would find fewer attractive alternatives to teaching. But what happens in other jobs over the years? About two-thirds of teachers in primary schools and nearly half of those in secondary schools are paid at or below this level. It's not much better at the top of the tree. Only 7.3 per cent of primary school headteachers get more than £30,000 a year. Only 4.5 per cent of secondary heads top £40,000 (2).

The Department for Education and Employment has been set to work on a green paper due for publication in November, intended to set out the ways in which the structure of the profession can be modernised — principally by creating better financial incentives for teachers to improve their performance and change the way education is delivered within schools. For his part, Mr Blunkett rejects the traditional Whitehall argument that the nation cannot afford to pay any more. He has implicitly accepted the union view that the pay ceiling for competent main-grade classroom teachers who do not want to take on managerial responsibilities is much too low and will have to increase.

At present a newly qualified teacher gets a starting salary of at least £13,131 a year. This is reasonable, it is not too far adrift from starting pay rates in other professions and comparable jobs. It is what happens next that marks teaching out as a financial slum. By the age of 30, a teacher who wants to teach and to stay in the classroom (usually extra responsibility points are only

available to those taking on administrative or non-classroom responsibilities) is stuck on £22,023 for the rest of his or her career (The graphic shows what happens in other jobs over the years). About two-thirds of teachers in primary schools and nearly half of those in secondary schools are paid at or below this level. It's not much better at the top of the tree. Only 7.3 per cent of primary school headteachers get more than £30,000 a year. Only 4.5 per cent of secondary heads top £40,000 (2).

PERHAPS the simplest solution to the recruitment crisis of those entering the profession's appreciation of teachers by giving all of them a whopping pay increase — young and old, good, bad and indifferent. In a materialist society you signal values by pound signs. Increase every teacher's salary by £5,000. It would cost an extra £2 billion a year. It sounds dramatic but would it do much to make teaching a financially-attractive long-term career? The Treasury is never going to accept such an indiscriminate approach. Instead the Government is working towards a targeted approach. A first pointer came in January when the pay review body for teachers announced that "the time is approaching when (the pay structure) should be reviewed to ensure that it continues to support the aim of raising educational standards through the flexibility it gives to schools and the incentives and rewards it offers to teachers" (3). Council leaders yesterday raised the temperature by urging the review body itself be scrapped.

The Government accepts the argument for more in principle. Mr Blunkett is indicating that "several hundred million pounds" will be available on top of the normal annual pay rounds for distribution to

teachers according to merit, starting in 2000-01. The money will be drawn from a £1 billion service development fund included in Gordon Brown's £19 billion boost for education speeding over the next three years, though how much of that fund is set aside for pay is not yet clear. The aim is to provide performance incentives for more teachers. Those working well against the odds in disadvantaged schools with poor test or exam results would be just as likely to get a substantial bonus as staff in establishments at the top of the league tables. The green paper will flesh out what Mr Blunkett means by his promise of "sophisticated methods of assessment linked to broader performance standards and the meeting of teachers' personal targets, including those which are related to pupil performance" (4). He does not have in mind some cosy arrangement whereby heads will be free to appraise their staff and increase the pay of those whose faces fit. The heads of sleepy schools are under suspicion and their decisions on performance pay will require external verification.

The package will come with other strings attached, requiring teachers to accept new conditions of employment. The Government does not seem anxious to take away their longer holidays, but it wants a more flexible school day and changes in traditional classroom structures. As schools learn the educational benefits of information technology, the best teachers could become higher-status "managers of learning resources" supported by technicians and classroom assistants. Similar developments are afoot in medicine: the Government yesterday announced the creation of a new grade of "consultant" nurse.

Mr Blunkett has not yet told the teachers how much they might get in return, but David Hart of the headteachers' association has costed what school heads think is needed. They want good classroom teachers to be able to break

through the current £23,000 ceiling and move up to a maximum of £31,000 if they can demonstrate sustained excellence. Above that there would be a salary grade rising to £40,000 for those undertaking significant extra responsibilities. He estimates this would cost £200 million in the first year, rising to £1.8 billion after eight years as the good teachers move in gradual steps towards the new ceilings. That could be affordable in the run-up to the election, although the eventual outlay would be considerable.

It is too soon to say whether the teaching unions would accept such a package. They are suspicious of payment by results and think the current system of staff appraisal by headteachers is discredited. But a recent survey by the National Union of Teachers showed a substantial majority were in favour of widening pay differentials in order to benefit staff who improve their skills and their competence. The likeliest outcome is that the profession will be dragged suspiciously towards the Government's version of modernisation. It would be wonderful if teachers had the organisation and status to dictate their own future as an autonomous profession, but that remains an impossible dream in a long-underfunded sector in which the state will always be in the driving seat.

Sources: (1) Graduate Teacher Training Registry figures for acceptances by mid-August; (2) Office of Manpower Economics survey for School Teachers Review Body, December 1997; (3) School Teachers' Review Body 1998 report, para 147; (4) Times Educational Supplement, July 24, 1998. Graphic sources: Nuffield, Tesco; Law Society; Unison; Collette Hill Associates; Police Federation; Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Graphics: Jason Pickersgill. Research: Matthew Keating. John Carvel is the Guardian's education editor.

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FinanceGuardian

Ex-Lloyd's man for NatWest

Jill Treanor

SIR DAVID ROWLAND, former head of Lloyd's of London, was yesterday named as chairman of NatWest.

The surprise choice ends months of uncertainty, which had led to speculation in the City that Lord Blyth, chief executive of Boots, would take over.

Sir David, 65, will become chairman in April of next year. He was appointed at yesterday's routine monthly board meeting, at which it was unanimously decided

that he should succeed Lord Alexander, 62, who will have been at the helm for a decade. Sir David's appointment comes as NatWest appears on the brink of repairing its reputation after a turbulent year. The City will be looking to Sir David to carry through plans to develop a stronger retail bank — which will result in the loss of more than 10,000 jobs — and to steer the bank away from the costly disasters of previous years.

Lord Alexander has presided over one of the worst periods in the bank's history. He took over as chairman just after the damaging Blue Arrow affair, which led to a

high-profile fraud trial in the late 1980s, and was charged with turning round the bank's battered image.

Under his chairmanship, NatWest has been forced to sell off its troublesome American banking business. Ambitions to forge a global investment facility on the side of the retail banking business ended in ruin. NatWest Markets, the troubled investment banking division, was sold off last year after a trader created an \$80 million hole in its derivatives trading book.

The chaos surrounding the investment banking debacle led to reports of a damaging boardroom rift and last year left the bank plotting a

merger with rivals such as Abbey National and the Prudential. There was even an approach by Barclays, its arch rival, about a tie-up.

"We believe that Sir David, with his long experience and fine achievements within the financial services industry, is the right person to lead the board and to build upon the strengths of our business," Lord Alexander said.

There had been earlier calls for an interim chairman to be appointed, however, who could fill the gap between next April and September when many had thought that Lord Blyth, 57, would be free from his obligations at Boots.

Sir David's age led some analysts to raise their eyebrows, but Lord Alexander was adamant that Sir David would serve as chairman for four years.

Banking sources suggested that Sir David's knowledge of financial services had proved preferential to Lord Blyth's knowledge of retailing.

NatWest's shares rose 3 per cent on the news, defying the market trend.

Sir David will spend half the week as NatWest's chairman, devoting the rest to Templeton College, Oxford University's business school, where he is president.

Sir David retired as chairman of Lloyd's of London at the end of last year after a five-year period during which he led the insurance market's "reconstruction" programme.

During his time at Lloyd's Sir David, known as a golf fanatic, was described as "focussed and committed".

NatWest also announced other changes to its board. Sir Richard Evans, chairman of British Aerospace, will join on October 1. Lord Eurd and Sir George Quigley will both leave at the shareholder meeting next April.

Notebook

Bank hopes for calmer waters



Alex Brummer

SIR DAVID ROWLAND hopes to claim a better legacy at NatWest than his predecessor, Lord Alexander's period at the helm began with a regulatory problem — the aftermath of the Blue Arrow affair — and was followed by several other difficulties, including a bloody recession for the small business sector and losses in North America and Australia. No sooner had these problems been overcome than NatWest was mired in a new scandal with the mispricing and misrecording of interest rate swaps at NatWest Markets. The result of this catalogue of trouble was a bank which lost confidence in itself and ground to some of its competitors, notably Lloyds TSB and HSBC.

As he looks forward to the relative calm of the cricket World Cup next spring, Lord Alexander appears more confident now than at almost any point in his stewardship that he leaves behind a secure institution. Apparently NatWest has only marginal exposure in the Russian debt or emerging market crisis; it has run its small and medium-sized business book sufficiently cautiously not to have to raise provisions enormously to take account of UK slowdown or recession and seems confident that after a surprisingly buoyant first half of 1998, it can maintain momentum in the current period of the year.

This is not say all will be hunky-dory for Sir David. He will face several challenges as the two-and-a-half days a week chairman. On the marketing front, NatWest, like the other clearers, has never taken the supermarket and newsworld challenge seriously enough, so about £5 billion of personal deposits have leaked away to the interlopers over a short period. While this might not be a revolution on the scale seen in petrol retailing, it is one which Lord Blyth of Boots, who had been expected to take the mantle at NatWest — might have been better equipped to deal with than Sir David, whose expertise is in the more esoteric areas of finance.

Where Sir David might have the edge over Lord Blyth is in the matter of financial service agglomeration. There is little doubt that the combination of the onset of the euro, a crowded presence in the European-wide financial services market and the trends towards bancassurance will eventually drive NatWest — like everyone else in the sector — into mergers. This is where Sir David's insurance background and international experience should hold him in good stead.

Some analysts were questioning Sir David's age at 65. But in these turbulent times, leadership by a grey fox

might be considered a distinct advantage. There will be one other important task for Sir David — grooming a new chief executive. Derek Wanless may have come through the crisis strengthened, but shareholders are unlikely to forgive him over the longer haul for the last years — some of the most productive in the banking sector — during which NatWest stood still.

The immediate need and urge for change may have gone, but the stock market remains an unforgiving place.

Market repairs

DESPITE the political stalemate in Moscow there are signs that equity markets are regaining a sense of perspective. The return of New York to trading after the Labour Day holiday was joyous, with the Dow Jones making strong gains, which means that for the moment it is more or less even on the year. The trigger for the Dow and Nasdaq rallies originates ironically with the same person who since November 1996 has been warning that share markets are too high — Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan.

The reality is that with the passing of Labour Day, the beaches of the Hamptons and Martha's Vineyard have emptied, senior investment bankers and financial officials are back at their desks, and all the obvious things which needed saying and doing are being done.

Greenspan has indicated that the federal funds rate, the US market interest rate, will not be rising any time soon, and has left open the possibility of a rate cut at the September 29 session of the policymaking open markets committee. In Germany, Bundesbank council member Olf Sievert has dismissed the notion that there is any need for a tightening in the euro area before the end of the year, and has indicated that an easing is possible if it becomes necessary for global purposes. It is difficult to believe that even the thus-far impervious Bank of England monetary policy committee will not be alert to the global dangers when it starts deliberations today.

There is also a quickening of the pace of international financial diplomacy. The Group of Seven deputies will be gathering on September 13 to talk over Russia. After a Washington meeting of Latin American finance ministers and the IMF, Brazil — which has been hard hit by the Russian fallout — is taking steps to trim its budget deficit as part of an effort to restore faith in its currency, the real, and stem the outflow from its equity markets, which have now fallen 43.74 per cent so far this year.

The September turnabout in equity markets and on currency markets, where the dollar and the pound have lost some of their fizziness, should steady nerves.

But the fundamentals still remain worrying, from Tokyo to Kuala Lumpur and Moscow. The odds on a severe global slowdown have not shortened.

Bulls back in Wall Street as pound takes another dip

Mark Tran in New York and Mark Miller

WALL Street joined the rally in markets around the world yesterday as investors took heart from blints by Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan of a cut in interest rates to head off global recession.

After the Labour Day holiday weekend, the Dow Jones index was up as much as 300 points in morning trading before giving back some of its gains.

Shares prices in Paris and Frankfurt rallied strongly but London, which had surged on Monday, was little changed yesterday. However, the pound fell a penny to 2.8637 German marks — its lowest level since late May — amid further evidence that the pace of UK economic growth is continuing to slow.

The dollar slipped on the hint of lower US rates but then recovered as the stock market soared. Dealers took the view that overseas investors would need dollars to buy their way back into the US stock market.

The recent Wall Street sell-off had seen the Dow plunge 18 per cent from its record 9337.97 in July, prompting many analysts to warn that the US was entering a bear market.

But yesterday the bulls were back in charge. The big winners in the rally were financial services firms, which have been among the most battered in recent weeks because of their trading losses and exposure to emerging

markets from Russia to Latin America.

The Nasdaq stock market, where many technology companies are listed, also stormed back yesterday.

Traders attributed Wall Street's comeback to Mr Greenspan. In a speech at the weekend at the University of California, Berkeley, Mr Greenspan signalled the Fed's willingness to cut rates because of a spreading global economic crisis which began in Thailand, spread to Indonesia, South Korea and Russia, and now threatens Latin America. Casting the largest shadow is Japan, which is struggling to get its economy moving.

"The consensus is a rate hike for this year is ruled out and the possibility of a rate cut has increased now," said Peter Coolidge, senior equity trader at Breaux Murray. "That is giving the market a shot in the arm. Is this a technical bounce-back or a forming of a bottom? I'm not sure."

Mr Greenspan's remarks may have given the market some relief because investors are keenly interested in the possibility of lower interest rates. But Mr Greenspan also spoke about the prospect of lower corporate profits as US companies are hit by low growth in Asia. Lower profits are likely to have a negative impact on share prices, but investors yesterday chose to accentuate the positive.

"The correction has taken excess out of the market and it is time for the bull market to resume," said Roy Blumberg of the Josephthal brokerage.

GMTV 'up for grabs' after licence talks

Chris Barrie, Media Business Correspondent

THE ownership of break-fast television producer GMTV will be up for grabs as soon as its future is clarified later this year, one of its biggest shareholders indicated yesterday.

Scottish Media Group, the TV and newspaper company which owns 20 per cent of GMTV, said it would consider its position once the break-fast programme producer had renegotiated the terms of its licence with the industry regulator, the Independent Television Commission.

Stressing that SMG had yet to decide whether to keep, increase or lower its stake, chief executive Andrew Flanagan said the board would consider its position once the new terms were known.

His views echo indications from the Guardian Media Group, which owns 15 per cent of GMTV, that the group's ownership structure may be renegotiated shortly.

Mr Flanagan said GMTV seemed likely to lose up to £7 million this year. The company wanted to cut the annual £50 million payment it makes to the Government for the franchise.

Speaking at the announcement of SMG's half-year results, Mr Flanagan warned that the outcome of the ITC

review of licence payments was "crucial" to GMTV's commercial viability.

Excluding an exceptional gain of £3.5 million on the sale of its stake in Dister TV, SMG turned in a 27 per cent increase in half-year profits to £23.5 million or 59.9 pence per share. Shares rose 31p, to close at 650p.

The company also announced that it had agreed to buy the video, music and book publisher, VCI, for £31.2 million, or 80p a share.

VCI owns the rights to Thomas the Tank Engine videos and Manchester United merchandise, and has long-term relationships with Granada TV and Channel 4, and with producers HatTrick and Cameron Mackintosh.

Mr Flanagan said SMG had no plans to emulate Rupert Murdoch's interest in football by making an offer for a club.

"In the short term, football clubs seem to be a licence to lose money rather than print it," he said.

But he understood the reasoning behind British Sky Broadcasting's interest.

He added that the outlook for advertising was "satisfactory". The company's production business had suffered from a fall-off in drama commissions following a review at ITV's Network Centre, but would step up its pursuit of commissions in other genres, such as factual programming for Channel 4 and BSkyB.

Green energy ruled out as too costly

Terry Macalister

THE future of renewable energy was thrown into doubt yesterday by the electricity regulator, Professor Stephen Littlechild.

He said meeting government manifesto targets for renewable energy was uneconomic because it would cost up to £15 billion.

His comments drew criticism from government insiders and environmental groups.

Prof Littlechild said: "It is for consideration whether the benefits of renewable energy justify incurring costs on such a scale."

The Government has vowed to produce 10 per cent of electricity needs



from renewable energy by 2010, but the regulator warned that the high cost would require a fossil fuel levy of between 6 per cent and 8 per cent, which would have to be paid for by customers over the next 15 years.

Marcus Rand, a renewables specialist at the environmental campaign group Greenpeace, expressed astonishment about Prof Littlechild's views: "We think the 10 per cent target can not only be met but exceeded."

Prof Littlechild's comments came less than a week after the energy minister, John Birt, threw his weight behind offshore wind technology.

He has asked for industry views on how best to incorporate offshore wind energy.

In yesterday's advice to



£15 billion blow... Electricity regulator Stephen Littlechild says energy sources such as this wind farm at Glemas, Anglesey, are too expensive. PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS THOMAS

the Non-Fossil Fuel Obligation Order (NFFO) process, which is the main vehicle for public money to be channelled into renewables.

The renewables sector

has been boosted recently by announcements from oil groups such as British Petroleum and Shell that they have set their own ambitious targets for producing energy from this source.

BG admits increase in gas cut-offs is irreversible

Terry Macalister

BRTISH GAS successor BG has admitted it will not be able to keep disconnections at their level in 1996, when the company's gas supply monopoly ended.

Figures released yesterday showed 7,548 consumers were disconnected for non-payment last quarter, a rise of 38 per cent compared with the same period of 1997.

A BG spokeswoman said the company was unlikely to keep the annual level of disconnections below 18,000, let alone reduce them to the 15,000 rate of 1996. She blamed the increase on the introduction of competition.

The Gas Consumer Council claimed that BG had said last year, when disconnections doubled, that rates would "settle down" to their 1995 level. The council expressed concern at the 25 per cent increase in the use of pre-payment meters in the three months to June. Historically, increased use of pre-payment meters had meant fewer disconnections, the council said, but this relationship now appeared to have been broken.

The BG spokeswoman pointed out that 84 per cent of disconnections were made without communication between company and customer. "We urge customers to contact us when they have not paid their bills," she said.

Speculation over bid by Italian group puts Enterprise in frame

Mark Miller and Terry Macalister

ENTERPRISE OIL yesterday found itself at the centre of bid speculation after the Italian energy group ENI was forced to detail its acquisition policy.

Rumours of a bid for Enterprise — which prompted the Italian stock exchange authorities to demand a statement from ENI — initially sent shares in Britain's largest independent oil producer sharply higher. Later, however, they fell back over fears that the company may drop out of the FTSE.

The Italian group said: "Major oil companies are con-

sidering ways in which to concentrate business activities with those of other companies. ENI has not yet identified specific opportunities."

The sharp fall in the price of oil has increased pressure for mergers within the industry, with BP and Amoco agreeing a full-scale link-up, while Shell and Texaco are combining their refining and petrol station businesses in Europe.

Pierre Jungels, chief executive of Enterprise Oil, said: "We have heard nothing [from ENI]. These are just rumours."

Talk of a bid was enough to push Enterprise shares to 376p from their overnight close of 350p. They fell back, however, to end little changed.

Savings ads ruled unfair

Tony Lawrence

TWO of Britain's biggest savings institutions were yesterday found guilty of producing misleading and unfair advertisements.

The Advertising Standards Association said the Bank of Scotland and the Bradford & Bingley building societies had made unfair comparisons against competitors in commercials. The judgments followed complaints from both the public and rival institutions whose accounts were attacked.

The Bank of Scotland advert offered savers with £5,000 a 7 per cent return in its Banking Direct telephone account. Under the banner "Are you

losing interest in your building society?", it claimed Nationwide paid 4.2 per cent, Bradford & Bingley 4.05 per cent and Britannia 3.5 per cent.

The Building Societies Association, which complained on behalf of its members, said the advert was an unfair comparison of branch-based accounts with a telephone account. It also ignored those banks which paid better rates for a postal account.

The ASA ruled the advert gave Bank of Scotland "an unfair advantage".

In the Bradford & Bingley's bowler-hatted duo were rapped for proclaiming "Look who's top of the table", comparing its own rates favourably to those from Abbey National, Halifax and Woolwich.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.72	Germany 2.7825	Malaysia 6.34	Singapore 2.81
Austria 13.52	Greece 478.75	Malta 0.6187	South Africa 10.02
Belgium 57.39	Hong Kong 12.48	Netherlands 3.1264	Spain 25.69
Canada 2.45	India 71.02	New Zealand 3.14	Sweden 12.67
Cyprus 0.6197	Ireland 1.0382	Norway 12.51	Switzerland 2.27
Denmark 10.55	Israel 6.495	Portugal 282.51	Turkey 444.300
Finland 5.593	Italy 2.781	Saudi Arabia 5.10	USA 1.6100
France 5.2974			

Supplied by NatWest (banking rates, shares and credits)

Tour drug confessions released, page 15
Lancashire sign Muralitharan, page 15

SportsGuardian

Teesside club launch a vitriolic attack on the player who they say let them down

Boro fury as Merson joins Villa



Those details, however, almost became an irrelevance yesterday as Boro, in the shape of their manager Bryan Robson and chief executive

After the problems with and subsequent departures of Fabrizio Ravanelli, Emerson and Juninho, Middlesbrough have been outraged by Merson's comments, and Lamb said: "Everyona connected with Middlesbrough has been let down by Paul Merson: the fans, the players, his friends."

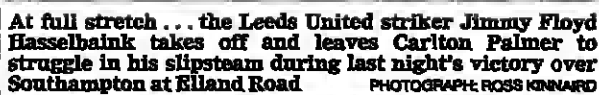
"And to say his fellow players are drinkers and gamblers is a slur and a libel. All the other players at the club are

At this stage matters become blurred. Merson said Middlesbrough cancelled the meeting, but Lamb insisted that was un-

club you're at, and I am not blaming other players. They were not gambling £20,000 a time or anything like that but

have longer breaks than the rest of the squad. That friendship and loyalty, Robson feels, has been abused.

Top billing for Graham



The "George don't go" banners were conspicuous by their absence, something which probably confirms that modern football supporters have metamorphosed into cynics, insulating themselves against disappointment by acknowledging that nothing lasts forever in a sport of no discernible loyalty.

The ease with which Leeds held sway in midfield should have provided a platform for substantial progress but, when in the mood, they are proficient at transforming wine into water.

Leeds United (4-4-2): Martyn, Hiden, Molesear, Reddick, Harte; Hopkins, Hesland, Bowyer, Kewell; Hasselbaink, Wijnhard.
Southampton (4-4-2): Moss; Werner, Dodd, Marshall, Hiley; Ripley, Howells, Palmer, Bridge, Beards, Hughes.
Referee: A. Wallis (Chester-le-Street).

At full stretch . . . the Leeds Hasselbaink takes off and struggle in his slipstream during the final stages of the 1000 Miles of Southampton at Elland Road.

**United striker Jimmy Floyd
leaves Carlton Palmer to
ing last night's victory over**
PHOTOGRAPH: ROSS KINNARD

Guardian Cross

word No 21,375

1

England win no prizes for popularity contest



You're only read

fully covered with

"You'd turn

...and you'd just be m

ebbed, no one could

10 Obtain compensation for serious injury (6)
11 Dispute previous decision — tessera ought to be reallocated

26 Reduce the effectiveness of a solution (6)

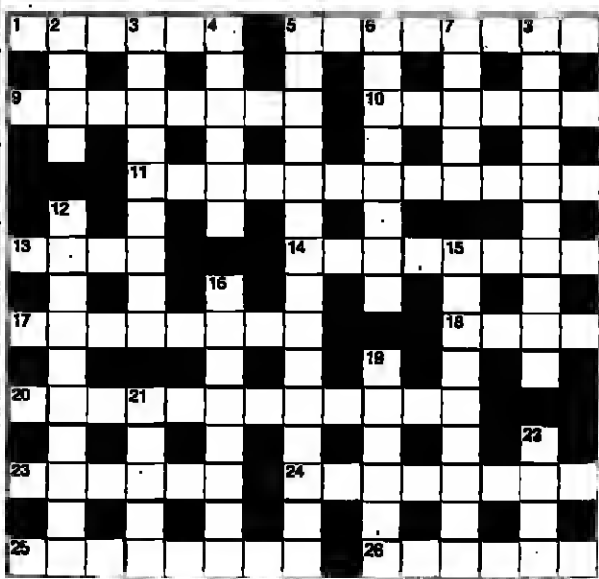
Down

22 See 8
Solution tomorrow
☎ Stuck? Then call our solutions line
on 0800 338 238. Calls cost 50p

“You’d turn up and you’d just be mobbed, no one could stop it, and you’d have to get out of town quick. Otherwise you’d get slashed, beaten up. It was very scary.”
On tour with the Sex Pistols

Arts, G2 page 8

Guardian Crossword No 21,375
Set by Fawley



10 Obtain compensation for serious injury (6)
11 Dispute previous decision — tessera ought to be reallocated

26 Reduce the effectiveness of a solution (6)

Down

6 Is it in the way, leading to fit of
 version? (4,4)
 7 A grass often consumed with
 anger (5)
 8,22 Made an impression,
 given job for priority delivery
 (10,4)
 12 See 2
 15 Feel ill after dash round
 disreputable place for a
 cocktail (5,4)
 16 Minor railway used by troops
 (8)
 19 Somewhat uppity, out of
 pride, subaltern is suffering
 insults (6)
 21 Works board over half of
 switchboard employees (5)
 22 See 8
Solution tomorrow
 10a Stuck? Then call our solutions line
 on 0800 330 330. Calls cost 50p

هكذا من الأصل